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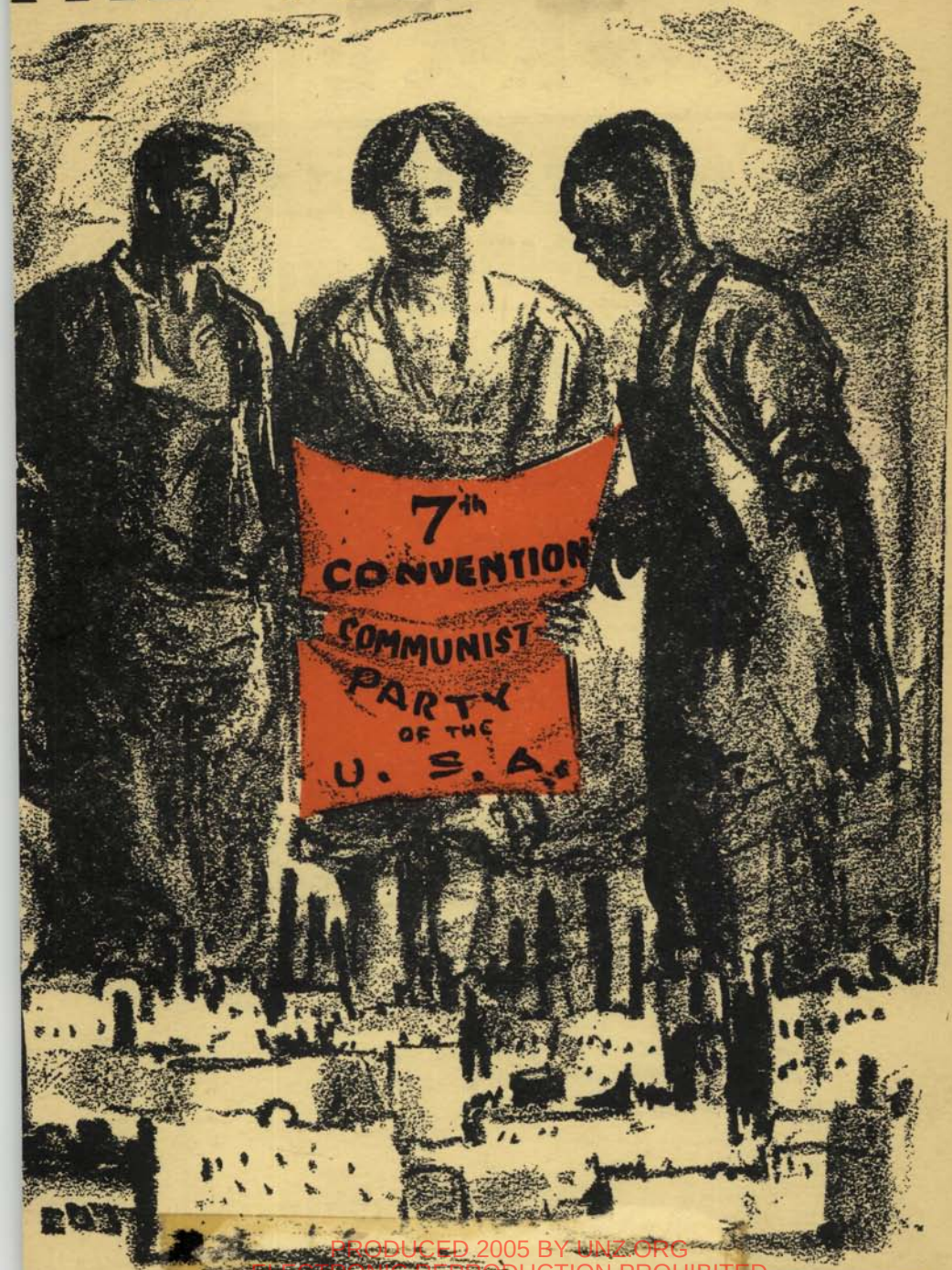
THE COMMUNIST



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THE COMMUNIST

A Magazine of the Theory and Practice of Marxism-Leninism

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MAX BEDACHT, *Editor*

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Notes of the Month

ON June 20th, the Communist Party of the United States will hold its Seventh National Convention. This convention will be of great importance to our Party and the American working class. The historic period since our last Sixth convention was marked with great changes in the policy and tactics of our Party and in the development of the struggle of the American working class. For the first time in its history the American Party will have a united convention, united on principle and on the political line of the Communist International. For the first time in its history, the Convention will be a real representative convention of delegates coming not from factions. This is the first prerequisite for a successful convention and for correct policies and tactics to be worked out and adopted at this convention.

The tasks before our Party today are tremendous. The objective possibilities, the developing class struggle, the growing economic crisis and the vicious ever-increasing terror of the bosses, offers our Party splendid opportunities to provide leadership and guidance to the struggle of the American working class. But while these objective opportunities are here, the Party is not at all prepared to take full advantage of them. The shortcomings of our Party today are still so great that unless the membership is awakened to the seriousness of the situation, the Party will not be able to fulfill its duties.

March Sixth and May First have definitely proven the growing influence of our Party and the acceptance of the leadership of our Party by large sections of the American working class. What is necessary at the present time and what will be the main question for consideration at our National Convention, is the task of consolidating our political influence and support of the masses and giving it organizational expression in the form of building mass revolutionary trade unions and continuously increasing the numerical strength of our Party and the circulation of our Communist press.

Although the Party succeeded through the unqualified support of the membership in delivering a smashing blow which destroyed organized opportunism and rid itself of Lovestone's opportunistic group, yet the Party must recognize that it did not succeed in destroying the Right danger. The Right danger in our Party still exists. Today, the Right Danger expresses itself in lagging behind the struggles of the workers, in underestimating the readiness of the masses to struggle and failure to see the effects of the crisis.

Side by side with this great shortcoming goes the failure of the

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Party to establish itself more firmly in the factories. If the Party is to lead and organize the masses of workers in revolutionary trade unions, the Party first of all must have direct connection with these workers in the factories and basic industries. This can only be achieved through shop nuclei and through shop committees, and general systematic day to day activity of the Communists in the factories. Mass revolutionary trade unions cannot be built only through spontaneous struggles of the workers, nor through spasmodic Party activity. This can only be accomplished through competent recruiting and organizational preparations made beforehand.

The Seventh Convention, meeting in a period of growing class struggle and sharpening crisis of capitalism, will therefore have to consider not only the correct political line which shall serve as a guide for our activities but will also have to consider the method of carrying out this line into practice and must mercilessly criticize its shortcomings and weaknesses.

Building up of a revolutionary Bolshevik Party is a tedious process. A Bolshevik Party cannot be born over night. It steels itself in the course of its struggles. It cleanses itself in the course of struggle. In this process the Party is engaged at present, which will result in the establishment in the United States of a bolshevik Leninist mass Communist Party, leading the workers to struggle.

* * * *

THE correctness of the analysis contained in the pre-convention thesis of our Central Committee Plenum is being fully borne out by the very developments of the economic life of the country. The magic sixty days of Hoover are over, but the economic crisis becomes sharper. Economic statistics supplied by the very bourgeoisie itself prove this very concretely. No class conscious worker will take the government assertions seriously, nor does the capitalist class attribute any importance to them. We have now all the facts concerning the economic conditions for the first quarter of 1930 and can clearly see the prospects of the situation. The *Annalist* in its review of the first quarter of 1930 states:

> "The figures that have lately been put out by the government authorities on new construction, volume of unemployment, building conditions, and a variety of other matters have been almost wholly untrustworthy. In many cases, they have been badly garbled and simply cannot be relied upon at all."

So speaks one of the most authoritative organs of American capitalism of the present situation. The month of April has witnessed a small increase of 3 points in the index of business activity, and reached a total of 92.8. This, however, represents a decrease

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fascists see the growing resistance of the British working class against the imperialist policy of the Labor Government and are therefore forced to use phrases and pose as an opposition to the Labor Government.

The imperialist policy of the British Labor Government is fully supported and approved by the entire Second Socialist International. The Second International in one of its recent manifestos to the workers of the world on May 13th forgot about the shooting down of Indian workers in India, the shooting down of workers in Indo-China and capital punishment imposed upon the leaders of the Indo-China revolt, but they did remember the "misery and oppression" of the Russian workers. In their manifesto not one word is said concerning the struggle of the Indian masses against British imperialism and its Labor Government, but they had something to say to the Russian workers:

"They (meaning the Second International) know that your conditions of work are still worse than in the capitalist lands."

Equally dumbfounded and taken by surprise concerning the imperialist policy of the Labor Government are the American Socialists. At the time of the visit of MacDonald to the United States, the American Socialists with Norman Thomas at their head, told the entire American working class that what the Labor Government is doing for Great Britain they will do for the United States. The imperialist policy of the British Labor Party is therefore not an isolated occurrence, but is part of the general imperialist policy of the entire Second International, of which the American Socialists are a part.

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The Major Problem Before the Seventh Convention of the C. P. U. S. A.

By MAX BEDACHT

THE period since its Sixth Convention was the most eventful one in the history of the Communist Party of the United States. It brought the tasks of the Party, its weaknesses and its possibilities to the attention of every Party member in the sharpest possible form.

The campaign of bolshevization which started with the reorganization of our Party in 1925 remained very much on the surface. The organizational changes in the course of this bolshevization process remained largely formal changes. The old forms of language federations and Party branches on the basis of official political subdivisions were practically useless for the work of the Party. They did not help in accomplishing the task of driving its roots of the Party into the working class. The Communist Party as the vanguard of the working class must be its head; but this head cannot be disconnected from the main body; it must have intimate connections with it, must be an integral part of it. Its organizational structure must be such that it makes possible the conveyance of the Party's understanding, of its revolutionary will, of its inspiring energy and of its directives to the working class. At the same time this Party structure must permit the feelings of the working class, the reactions of the working class to economic and political events, the reaction of the working class to the action of the Party, to flow back into the Party and to its leadership. The old form of organization was not conceived for such purposes. It was adapted to the functions of an election campaign machinery and of a propaganda body. Even for the latter function it was inadequate. Its propaganda was carried on unsystematically and its audiences were gathered promiscuously by advertisment and like methods without consideration of the class composition of the incidental audience such methods may bring.

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steadfastly raising the consciousness of the masses and the wide sweep of their united actions, of which each individual move is sometimes one of the offensive, another time one of the defensive, but together they all lead towards an ever deeper and more decisive conflict." And the working class of the U. S. in its ever unfolding struggle applies this Leninist tactic: *multiplying* methods of struggle, *combining* different methods, raising its own class consciousness, *passing* over to ever higher forms of struggle. Economic and political strikes, sometimes alternating, at other times simultaneous and interwoven into one indivisible whole, unite the masses of workers against the capitalists and the bourgeois state, fermenting discontent among ever wider masses of the proletariat and drawing into the fight the great mass of agricultural laborers (the strike of 5,000 agricultural laborers in Imperial Valley) and farmers.

This varied combination of methods and forms for mass struggle is at present based first of all on the growth of unemployment. Labor strikes are getting to be ever more often interwoven with revolutionary demonstrations. The most characteristic feature of the class struggle in America, is exactly the numerous revolutionary demonstrations of proletarian masses taking place daily. Tremendous masses of the proletariat demonstrated on the streets and were also engaged in open fights with the police. The proletarian struggle pushes its way into the open, on the streets. The development and results of this form of struggle determine for the time being the moods of the classes. It is an indicator of the level of the revolutionary upsurge and its character. A combination of the economic and political strike with revolutionary demonstrations—that is the particular form of struggle that is pushed to the front for the present by the mass revolutionary movement.

This form of proletarian struggle determines the level of the revolutionary upsurge and itself receives a mighty push as a result of the growth of the world economic crisis. The revolutionary mass demonstration—this higher form of class struggle that took shape after the First of May demonstrations of 1929, became the leading form after the Tenth Plenum of the ECCI and raised the revolutionary wave and the class struggle of the proletariat to a new and higher level. This form of proletarian struggle is dictated also by the ever growing importance of the movement of the unemployed. The circumstance, that unemployment plays such a role, that the unemployed by the thousands are beginning to occupy the front lines in revolutionary demonstrations, finds of course a corresponding tactical reply from the bourgeoisie and social-fascism.

The strategy of the bourgeoisie and of social-fascism consists in an effort to isolate the movement of the unemployed from the

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movement of the workers who are at work in the plants, to place that movement in opposition to the struggle of the employed workers. Hence our most important task is to accomplish a unification of the movement of unemployed and employed, to transform the struggle and the movement of unemployed against unemployment into a movement and struggle of the entire working class, make the struggle of workers in industry also a struggle for the interest of the unemployed as well. It follows that even basing itself on the economic struggle of the working class, on the struggle for partial demands, it is possible for revolutionary demonstrations to play a really revolutionizing role, the role of a much higher form of mobilization and bringing out of the masses. Only in this way is it possible to attain, on the one hand, a fusion of revolutionary mass demonstrations with economic and political strikes and, on the other hand, a unification, a united struggle of those employed with the unemployed and with the oppressed masses as a whole.

A mass revolutionary demonstration unites the struggle of those employed with the struggle of a tremendously big revolutionized army of unemployed, it continues the struggle of the proletariat with that of the farmers, the struggle of the city proletariat with that of the farm laborers. Thus it serves as a gauge of the extent of the revolutionary upsurge of the most varied and deepest layers of the oppressed masses.

The revolutionary demonstration is at the same time an expression of the higher level reached by the revolutionary upsurge. Here, the struggle of the masses, particularly under present conditions of a fascist and social-fascist regime of terror, is inevitably assuming sharpened political and revolutionary character. The mass demonstration is not an independent method of struggle under conditions of a ripening economic crisis and in the absence of a revolutionary situation: Only in conjunction with other forms of struggle, basing itself on them and at the same time pushing them ahead can it play the part of the motive power of the revolutionary upsurge. Under conditions of a crisis, when the bosses are only too ready to make use of lockouts, of shutting down the plants, there naturally arise particular difficulties. Here, the key to the situation is the daily mass work of the Communist Party. Without it there is the isolation of the vanguard from the masses, phrase-mongering about a revolutionary upsurge instead of organizing that upsurge, diluting the revolutionary content of the mass demonstration, its isolation from the struggle of the workers in the factories, its transformation into a mere playing with revolutionary demonstrations.

The demonstrations on March Sixth are truly the culminating point of an entire period of a growing mass movement, that finds

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its expression in numerous spontaneous and shortlived strikes interspersed with strikes of such magnitude, for instance, as the struggle in Gastonia, New Orleans, New Bedford, Illinois, and the strike of 5,000 farm laborers in California.

But these economic strikes, were at the same time political strikes, they were turned into such, and were being fused with political mass demonstrations. The 6 of March was their culmination, it was the biggest demonstration in the history of the American working class.

And thus, the small Communist Party of America is faced today with the very responsible task of giving leadership to a mass movement that is growing by leaps and bounds.

This movement cannot, of course, be expected to grow at an even rate of speed—today a million, tomorrow two million, etc. We know there will be ups and downs, low tides are sure to come, but there are sure to be also even still more turbulent tides. All of this, however, does not in any way detract from the significance of the movement of today nor of those problems that it places before the Party for solution. The "American tempo" characterizes today the development of the class struggle in America. The American labor movement of today is in some respects already proving to be a model for its older brother in arms, the European labor movement. The American Communist Party did in fact show an example in the course of the class struggle how to prepare the transformation of a small Party into a mass organization. It has also shown how a small Party can bring out in the streets tremendous masses and by this act alone produce the very pre-conditions for a mass Party.

"It is possible," said Lenin at the III Congress of the Comintern, "that even a small Party, for instance the English or American Party, after having made a thorough study of the course of political development and having familiarized itself with the life and habits of the non-Party masses, will be able at an appropriate moment to develop a revolutionary movement. If it will, at such moment, come out with its slogans and will succeed in having a million workers follow it — then you will have before you a full fledged mass movement."

Aren't those words referring directly and immediately to the American Communist Party and the mass demonstrations of the 6 of March? It is of course self understood that this does not eliminate the problem of winning the majority of the working class.

The March 6 mass movement in the U. S. is of very great international importance. It has in the most concrete manner brought into the world revolutionary upsurge the 30 millions of

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American proletariat, in the very rear of the colossus of world imperialism.

That is sure to give a mighty push forward to the development of a national revolutionary movement in the virtual colonies of American imperialism in Latin America. The American bourgeoisie, the A. F. of L. are today seriously losing their self confidence and stability. At one pole in the USSR, flourishing socialist construction, at the other pole—the undermining of the last and most important section of capitalist prosperity. On the whole it cannot possibly fail to be the biggest revolutionary factor in the international struggle of the working class.

Every proletarian Party is faced during such periods of upswing with "unexpected" gigantic organizational and political problems wholly incomparable with those of the previous comparatively peaceful period. And particularly acute and pressing are the organizational problems. It is no accident that Lenin, on the eve of the 1905 upheaval, as well as during the one of 1912, and from the very beginning of the revolution of 1917, did not cease to press for recognition of the organizational problems as of first importance. Organization, organization and again—organization. That was the slogan Lenin was pushing forward to the masses and the Party. To consolidate the positions already conquered, to embrace organizationally the growing mass movement, seriously to entrench ourselves in the basic industries, the strategically most important points in the class struggle—such is today the basic problem of the American Communist Party.

Basically this problem can be solved in only three ways:

In the first place, and before anything, broadening the cadres and strengthening all the various Party organizations and other organizations close to it and above all, the revolutionary trade unions. In the second place, by the unfolding of a truly bolshevik agitation among the widest masses of the working class. And lastly, by a radical improvement of the Party and non-Party press, making it a truly mass press that is basing itself on an army of worker-correspondents, turning it into an effective weapon for the political education and mobilization of the masses, into a weapon for the building up of the Party and non-Party organizations.

"We must greatly broaden," Lenin wrote on the eve of the revolutionary upheaval of 1905, "the cadres of the various Party organizations and its close affiliations in order to keep in step with the 100 fold increased torrent of revolutionary energy of the people." This at present is the most important problem for the Party. The Party touched and grappled with only one-half of the problem—the problem of recruiting into the Party of new workers and it is solving this problem in a Bolshevik man-

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ner. The Party has given the recruiting campaign the character of a truly mass political campaign. The entire Party was mobilized. The Central Committee and particularly the Organization Department of the CC has been converted into a general staff for the purpose of guiding this campaign. The central Party organ, the Daily Worker, was also mobilized for that purpose. The progress of the campaign was discussed daily; correspondence was arriving from the front discussing the successes and weaknesses of the campaign. The Organization Department was publishing weekly full data together with an analysis of the course of the campaign, a criticism of the shortcomings, emphasizing the achievements, bracing up those lagging behind.

The preliminary results during the course of the campaign were repeatedly discussed by the Central Committee and concrete instructions, based on a merciless self-criticism, were given to the organization. A truly revolutionary competition was built up among the organizations. The Party leadership as well as the Party as a whole never did close its eyes, to, or cover up, the shortcomings of this work. The basic task of the Party in this respect is to consolidate the results already achieved.

The Party today can afford to transfer the center of gravity of its further recruiting efforts in the direction of a qualitative improvement. We should keep in mind that the Party has also at its disposal other organizations, schools of the class struggle, schools of Communist strategy and tactics, where it can and in fact should recruit workers by the thousands who are insufficiently prepared, and in need of preliminary schooling. Such are, first of all, the *revolutionary trade unions*.

The change in the development of the class struggle expresses itself in the growth of a widespread and stubborn economic struggle of the working class. The dumping of tens of thousands of workers into the streets, into the ranks of the growing multimillion army of unemployed, the total lack of social insurance, the vicious intensification of labor, reduction of wages and lengthening of the working day for those still at work in the factories, the ruination and further enslavement of the masses of farmers—along this path of a vicious offensive against the standard of living of the proletariat and of the working masses as a whole is the bourgeoisie traveling in an effort to find a way out of the crisis. The bourgeoisie is mobilizing for that purpose its state apparatus—the social-fascists, hired-bands of strike-breakers and gangsters, religion, the press, etc.

In answer to this, we see rising the mass economic movement and counter-offensive of the workingclass and exploited farmers. This movement proceeds at an uneven tempo in different industries and varied sublayers of the working class, but it has nevertheless a

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truly mass character, embracing wide layers of the working class and under conditions of a growing fascistization of "American democracy" assumes an acute political character. This movement will unavoidably grow and is already taking up the very center of political life of the country. To organize and lead the economic struggle of the workers, to build up in the course of this struggle a common front of the employed and unemployed, tie it up with the struggle of the great masses of farmers—that is the all-embracing and decisive problem of the Party during the whole of the incoming period. Only in the process of really organizing and leading this struggle, of enlightening the masses on the lessons of their struggle and on the class problems of the movement, will the Party be able to solve the problem of winning the majority of the working class.

The Party as yet has not properly estimated the magnitude of the new problems and is not as yet clear on the methods of solving them. It has found one of those important methods, the recruiting into the Party of new thousands of workers, and along this line it has already achieved notable success. But the Party is not ready as yet to lead the rising revolutionary upsurge in the country. There cannot be any illusions on this point. And the Party cannot accomplish the task without a determined break, a sharp turn about in the methods of work, of developing and consolidating the revolutionary trade unions. The March 6 demonstrations that are an expression of a mighty spontaneous upheaval of the masses should not deceive the Party as to its own organizational weakness and absence of much firmer contacts with the wide masses. Only basing itself on the revolutionary trade unions, on the Trade Union Unity League, will the Party be able to accomplish successfully the task of assuming leadership in the struggles of the working class.

But the situation in the TUUL is as yet exceedingly tragic. In every way, organizationally, politically and from the point of view of cadres the TUUL is particularly weak and wholly unprepared to cope with its tasks. This was revealed in a particular clear manner by the strike in Illinois as well as by a series of other strikes (the strike of the needle workers, furriers, cloakmakers, food workers, etc.).

To arrive at a turning point in this field:

1. The Party must be clear on its problems in relation to the TUUL. Only the Party can build, strengthen and lead the TUUL. The Party is responsible for the condition of the TUUL. That, of course, does not in any way relieve the Party comrades directly leading the TUUL from immediate responsibility for its condition.

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The TUUL is not an organization parallel to and competing with the Party. The TUUL is a broad mass non-Party organization embracing the widest masses of workers, organizing them for the struggle for their daily interests and transforming that struggle along political channels. The TUUL has no objects that are contrary and contradictory to the Party. It is a school for training for the revolutionary class struggle of the widest masses of the working classes. It therefore is the lever and the reserve of the Party. There, therefore, cannot be such a thing as a Communist outside the TUUL. Every Communist inside the TUUL is carrying on the basic Party task, the task of maintaining contact with the wide masses of workers, winning them over on the side of the Communist Party. This goal will be achieved by the Communists not by means of a formal recognition by the TUUL of the leading role of the Party, not by offensively reminding the TUUL of that leading role, but by acting as the best fighters, best activizers and leaders in the mass movements of the working class.

2. It is necessary that the entire Party and its committees from the bottom to the very top should get busy with the task of leading and doing the work of the TUUL. The Party organizations should very carefully discuss the tasks and problems of the TUUL, and be mobilized for that job. It is necessary to build up mass self-criticism and control over the proper carrying out of decisions.

3. The Party press should be effectively mobilized for their task. The Daily Worker will have to play here a tremendously important part. It will have to convince the entire Party that the task of building and strengthening the TUUL is at present really the central problem of the Party. The workers correspondents will have to be mobilized for this task. Aside from this, it is necessary to print periodically a special section or page showing how this most important Party task is being carried out by the Party organizations.

4. The Party fractions are the basic lever of the Party in the TUUL. Without their systematic Bolshevik work there can be no change in the TUUL. The fractions should be perfected organizationally, should carry out the work of the TUUL systematically, should help the Party leadership to mobilize the Party for TUUL work, should formulate the TUUL problems for discussion by Party committees and Party organizations and should submit those problems to them. The Party fractions within the TUUL led as they are in their work by Party committees carry the full and immediate responsibility for the entire work of the TUUL.

However, the above measures will prove to be wholly insufficient and cannot be successfully carried out if the Party will not assure

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their success by strengthening of the Party cadres working within the TUUL. The Party must, for that purpose, carry out a proper redistribution of Party cadres at the center as well as locally. This redistribution must be carried out on such a scale as to insure at least a guaranteed minimum of a serious change in the TUUL work.

While carrying out the above mentioned tasks and keeping in mind the growing magnitude of its problems and the size of its forces the Party should be guided by a definite organizational and political plan that would provide for such a concentration of effort in the work of Party organizations and of the TUUL that would result in accomplishing the change, first of all in the more responsible decisive sections of the class struggle. In the TUUL itself, it is necessary:

1. To carry on the widest possible ideological campaign against a minority conception, a conception of a mere opposition to the old trade unions, that in actual practice was lately resulting in the TU UL organization dragging at the tail end of struggles. A most determined struggle both in theory and in practice should be conducted against such an ideology. The TUUL is an independent leader in the economic struggles of the working class. It is an uncompromising foe of the A. F. of L. Its task is to mobilize the masses, win them to its side, embrace them organizationally within its own folds and to destroy the American Federation of Labor, the most reliable support of American imperialism. At the same time, both the Party and the TUUL should intensify the work within the ranks of the A. F. of L. The TUUL, the same as the Party, each in its *own way*, must carry on an irreconcilable struggle against all, and particularly, against Right wing opportunism in the proletarian class struggle. Only acting as an independent organizer of the struggle of the masses under Party leadership can the TUUL grow and carry out its tasks.

2. The center of gravity of TUUL work should be definitely carried over into the factories. At present, the TUUL base in the factories is very weak.

3. We must strengthen and stabilize the TUUL organizationally. At present the TUUL is organizationally in a very deplorable state.

4. In all its activities the TUUL, especially its center, should strive to attain clearness, concreteness both in work and leadership. Leadership in particular should be concrete, popular, understandable to the masses, corresponding with the tasks of mass action.

5. The basic problem of the TUUL is the problem of cadres and a mere redistribution of Party forces cannot solve that problem

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in a fundamental manner. That will only be a decisive factor in bringing about the beginning of a change. A fundamental solution of the problems of cadres will be attained only in the course of the growth of the TUUL itself, only with the small mass promotion of ideologically more developed workers, during the very course of the struggle and their education.

6. Numerically, the TUUL is wholly out of step with the development of the mass movement. The present environment is especially favorable and demands categorically that this numerical weakness of the TUUL should be done away with. Under present conditions of a mass upsurge the TUUL cannot be considered as a mass organization.

7. The TUUL cannot accomplish a change in its development if the method of mass self-criticism will not be made the basic method of its work.

8. It is necessary to bring about a decided change in the character of the TUUL organ, Labor Unity. As at present constituted, Labor Unity does not in any way fill the bill. In its make up it is a bureaucratic paper incapable of satisfying the demands of a mass struggle. It is imperatively necessary to transform Labor Unity into a fighting mass organ, reflecting all the phases of the daily life and struggles of the working masses. This cannot be accomplished by Labor Unity unless it will base itself on a great army of worker-correspondents who should in the main, constitute the staff of the paper. The preparatory work for the coming Party convention as well as the work of the convention itself should be utilized to bring about a decided change in the development of the TUUL. A change in that direction will mean a change in the work and development of the Party itself. And that is at the present time the basic problem of the Party.

In the work of the revolutionary trade unions it is necessary particularly to emphasize at present the struggle against unemployment. More than anywhere else did unemployment take up a position in the very center of the stage of life in the United States. The Party and the revolutionary trade unions should make an effort to consolidate and develop the successes achieved in this connection on the 6 of March. The struggle against unemployment, and the leadership of the movement of unemployed should actually be used by the Party and the revolutionary trade unions as the starting point in the mobilization of the masses.

The work among the ranks of the A. F. of L. should be substantially strengthened. The social basis of social fascism including also this ultra imperialistic organization has sharply narrowed down, and is becoming still narrower. The workers that are still following the A. F. of L. are turning to the left, are

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looking for class leadership. The "left" social fascists (Musteites and the Socialist Party) who are being patronized by the bourgeoisie, and are trying hard, by means of the supposedly class phraseology and the treasonable tactics of a make believe leadership of the struggle to at least slow down the revolutionizing process that is pushing the masses into a position of class struggle. They are trying to accomplish it by making it appear that the objects of the class struggle can be attained without following the leadership of the Communists and the revolutionary trade unions. That is why the work inside the A. F. of L. must be intensified and the Party itself should direct its fire to unmask the "left" social fascists. The main fire should be directed there.

A change in the Party work among Negroes seems to have been achieved. This change should be consolidated politically. And that can be accomplished only provided the political content of that problem is made thoroughly clear and that means, to make the Negro problem in the South a problem of a national revolutionary movement in the United States. Only in this way will the Party be able to conduct successfully a fight against white chauvinism, to free the masses of the working farmers of the South from the influence of the bourgeois movement of Garvey, to build up the hegemony of the proletariat in the national revolutionary movement of the South, to tie it up with the revolutionary struggle of the workers and finally to build up the common front in this struggle between black and white workers. But the change in this line of work, if there is one, is as yet very insignificant and we must make a sharp turn.

For the present, one of the most important tasks of the Party in the line of Negro work is also the task of making the "Liberator" a fighting mass organ of the movement of Negro workers and farmers. This paper at present answers this purpose only to a very limited extent.

The turn that must be made in our revolutionary trade unions must also be carried through in the activities of the Young Communist League, altho the situation in the latter it not quite the same.

At last, we must achieve a decided break in the agrarian question. The Lovestonian leadership, true to Menshevist tradition, almost wholly ignored this question. It is altogether impermissible to maintain such an attitude now. The general crisis, made more acute by the agrarian crisis in turn highly intensifies the latter. The agrarian question acquires a tremendous revolutionary significance for the Party. The Party must come out in this case with a definite program. The Party will be able to achieve a united revolutionary front of workers and of the exploited masses of

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farmers if it itself together with the revolutionary trade unions carries on work among the farm laborers. Especially must be emphasized the sharpening of the agrarian crisis in the South in connection with its more cultured type of economy — and hence the necessity of developing here truly intensive activity is quite obvious.

Our Party has as yet made no attempt to utilize the opportunities of the particular field of work known as the municipal field. The Party should, in this connection, apply to itself all the conclusions and instructions of the Enlarged Presidium of the ECCI on the subject of municipal politics and Communist activity therein.

Lastly, about the Daily Worker. The importance of the paper is being enhanced to a very high degree, its responsibility is growing. The Daily Worker is a fighting newspaper. But it is altogether insufficiently a mass organ. In this respect a decided change should be attained. First of all a clearer and more popular style in the language of the paper should be introduced. The American Party is still burdened, especially in its press, with the heavy load inherited from Pepper and Lovestone. Pepper, raised and educated on Austro-Marxism, carried over much of its worst features into the work of the Communist Party. That is, in the first place, the pseudo-theoretical language that perverts Marxism. In the second place, the habit of speaking to the masses in such a way as to make it impossible for the masses to grasp what is wanted of them. That is, generally speaking, just what is so characteristic of opportunism. In the third place, the indulgence in very protracted and tedious make-believe theorizing at a time when the needs of the moment require plain and direct instructions to the masses as to *what they are to do.* The paper should resolutely cleanse itself of all that litter, of all that Pepperism.

It needs further:

a) A clear differentiation and classification of the different departments of the paper and their contents (the worker should be able to find at a glance in the paper just what he needs and what the paper wants to tell him).

b) We think that in this connection it is also imperative that the habit of continuing a subject matter from one page to another should be definitely stopped (this is a particularly undesirable feature in a popular mass paper).

c) The editorials should be short and cast in a decidedly more popular mold.

d) As much light as possible should be thrown on all the phases of the life and work of the Party organizations, of the building of the Party and of revolutionary trade unions (the work of Party organizations in that direction).

e) The paper is already beginning to throw some light on the

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organizational work; it should help the Party to achieve a decided change in the revolutionary propagandistic work: it should throw light on the work of the Young Communist League, on the work among women, the agrarian question, Negro work, work in the co-operatives and other mass organizations, conditions of its language sections. A more systematic and thorough enlightenment on the problems of the USSR, looking at it as a political problem, for the mobilization of the masses.

f) Generally, the paper should find a way of skillfully inaugurating intensified activity. The most important task of the paper is the building up of an army of worker-correspondents. But it isn't enough to create worker-correspondents, it is necessary to systematically educate them, teach them how to work, organize them, actively tie them up with the life and work of the paper. The paper should utilize the lessons of the discussion about the British Daily Worker at the Enlarged Presidium of the ECCI. In this connection, it may be of importance to make "The Communist" a semi-monthly organ of the Party.

Special attention should be paid by the paper to the task of giving help, critical guidance to the other national Party organs, above all to the special factory papers. The papers should take hold of this job in a most serious manner both organizationally, politically and in the sense of work to be done by the editorial department itself.

The sharpening of the class struggle, the growth of the mass movement, the rapid development of the revolutionary upsurge accelerates the fascistization of the state apparatus, the growth of social-fascism. This manifests itself in many ways: in the growth of police terror, the persecution of revolutionary workers and particularly of the Communist Party, the centralization of power of the bourgeois state, the unmasking of all remnants of "democracy," the growth of a "left" social-fascism. The Party should follow all these developments with the greatest attention, should reveal the fascist and social-fascist nature of the state and of social reformism; the Party should tie up this work with its entire daily activity of agitation and struggle in order that the working masses should really understand that the fight against fascism and social-fascism constitutes in fact the sum total of the contents of their entire class sruggle for the present period.

In this connection we are faced with the problem of illegality.

The Party should not play with illegality. It should unfold a struggle against the bourgeois attacks threatening the existence of the Party, and should transform it into a mass struggle. The question of a struggle against an illegal existence is a political question, a question of mobilization of the masses, a question of strengthening

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our contacts with them and first of all a question of strengthening the Party's positions inside the factories.

The intensification of the struggle against the war danger should be facilitated by placing the matter on practical grounds and by that is meant the serious consideration of the problem of work among the proletarians in uniform in the army and the navy.

The struggle against Right opportunism and against different leftist, sectarian deviations is not as yet at an end in the Party. The center of gravity of this fight is just now being transformed to the field of practical work—the struggle with opportunism in practice, the struggle against a sectarian underestimation of mass work and above all against an opportunistic lack of skill and ability to unfold a bolshevik tempo of mass, political and organizational work. That of course, does not in any way mean a weakening of the struggle against opportunism on the ideological front. Certainly not. But this struggle should be made more popular, more concrete.

The Party can solve all these problems only provided it will continue improving its methods of self-criticism and revolutionary competition. It should not be assumed that mass self-criticism can be depended upon to develop spontaneously and, once spontaneously developed, will necessarily turn out to be a Bolshevik self-criticism. The method of self-criticism is not only that particular field where the organizational principles of Bolshevism are not being applied. Mass self-criticism must also be developed, raised and nursed within the Party and the masses: the masses must be taught to master it, they must be shown its achievements and failures and the revolutionary problems of the day, etc. Mass criticism has already been of tremendous help to the Party but the problems of the future are of an incomparably greater scale and revolutionary self-criticism and competition are destined to play a tremendous revolutionary role.

The Communist Party of the U. S. is now entering the stream of a world-wide revolutionary upsurge of the masses. It has already entered it. The problem of cadres is getting to be particularly acute. This problem must, of course, be solved by a combination of various methods, education, school training, and training in the work in the fraternal mass organizations, and, above all, purging the cadres of opportunistic elements. However, a basic solution of the problem can be found only in the promotion of advanced proletarian Party members, who stood the test and ability as leaders of fighting masses in the very course of the struggle. This must be done all along the line—from the Party unit up to the Central Committee.

An inexperienced Party might feel perplexed and be at a loss to orientate itself when faced by all these unexpected but tremend-

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ously important immediate problems. It is, indeed, impossible to overcome this difficulty, unless we approach the matter in a bolshevik, Leninist way: "We should keep in mind," wrote Lenin, faced with a similar situation, "that just now, of much greater importance for the purpose of training and teaching is *action* which teaches those as yet untrained, to embrace our point of view, yes, wholly *our* point of view. . . . There are plenty of such people, never yet did revolutionary Russia possess such a mass of people as now. Never yet was the revolutionary class faced with such exceptionally favorable conditions as regards temporary allies, true friends and involuntary helpmates, as is the case with the Russian proletariat of today. There are plenty of people, masses of them, all it is necessary to do is to throw overboard all thoughts and sayings that keep you lagging behind, and to give full leeway, to open the way to the initiative of the masses."

The American Communist Party should bravely proceed along this Leninist road in its effort to embrace organizationally the great masses to develop cadres that would cope with the rapidly growing problem of the revolutionary upsurge, to transform itself in the quickest possible way into a mass Party and to conquer the majority of the working class.

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Some Burning Problems of Organization

By JOHN WILLIAMSON

A MOST pressing problem confronitng the Party today, which penetrates every field of work and every Section of the Party, is the understanding for and creation of, the proper organizational forms and activities to carry out and enforce the Party resolutions which have been passed and accepted.

This is not a new problem, but today with the rapidly growing influence of the Party and the innumerable demands made upon the Party it has become an acute problem which, unless solved, will result in serious consequences for the Party. Dealing with the same problem several years ago, before it assumed the acute form it has today in the Communist Party of the U. S. A., Comrade Kuusinen very aptly described the problem as follows:

> "One of the relics of social-democracy is the underestimation of the extent of the organizational tasks involved in reaching the masses. This approaches very nearly to an underestimation of the consciously Communist role of leadership. Miracles are expected from the elementary course of the spontaneous mass movement and inadequate steps are taken to organize and lead this mass movement... Our comrades talk a great deal about analysis of the situation, about slogans, political lines, etc., but unfortunately they concern themselves all too little with the organization of mass work."

This is the kernel of the general problem confronting us today which must be solved.

POLITICAL INFLUENCE VERSUS ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH.

There has always been a gap between the political influence and organizational strength of the Party, but today, the growing response of the masses to the leadership of the Party, arising out of the accentuated class struggle, widens this gap and makes it acute. This is also furthered by a persistent reliance on spontaneity which replaces systematic organizational preparations for all mass movements on the part of considerable sections of the Party. The solution of this problem must involve every nucleus and fraction, as well as all leading committees.

In the last nine months, four outstanding events took place which vividly brought home the correct Party estimation of the present

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period: August 1 Anti-War Demonstrations, the Cleveland TUUL Convention, March 6 Unemployment Demonstrations, embracing over one million workers, and May 1 embracing over 300,000 workers. In each of these the Party gained headway—the workers responding to the leadership of the Party and the TUUL in numbers far exceeding expectations or justified by organized preparations. But with each of these magnificent victories, the gap between the political influence and organizational strength and influence of the Party becomes wider. There has been too much strutting around with smug self satisfaction after such events, instead of seriously tackling and solving this problem. The solution does not lie in the curtailing of activities but in meeting this crisis of growth by a basic change in the organizational forms, methods and activities of the Party so that still greater masses will respond to the Party leadership but simultaneously will be absorbed organizationally. On all such occasions (August 1, March 6, May 1) we failed in the preparatory work to organize the workers for participation. Let every District answer how many Anti-War Committees were organized in the shops on August 1; how many committees of action of employed and unemployed were organized in the factories on March 6; how many May Day action committees were organized in the shops on May 1. In only a few cases would there be affirmative answers and these are negligible. This arises from two basic causes.

(a) the definite Menshevist tendency of minimizing the conscious role of Communist leadership and organization and substitution of spontaneity of the masses;

(b) definite resistance, either thru lack of sufficient propaganda by the Party leadership or as a result of non-Communist tendencies, to make the factory the main base of our activity.

To the extent that we organize the workers' participation in all such events, it is that much easier to consolidate organizationally the political influence of the Party established on every such occasion.

The bridging of the gap between the political and organizational influence of the Party is not alone the task of recruiting new members into the Party and organizing new shop nuclei. It means the embracing organizationally of these 1¼ million and 300,000 workers who responded on March 6 and May 1 into class struggle organizations, particularly the revolutionary trade unions of the Trade Union Unity League and the Unemployed Councils, as well as such other organizations as the Internatioal Labor Defense, Friends of Soviet Union, Labor Sports Union, and American Negro Labor Congress. The Party successes will mean little if simultaneously these workers, as well as every Party member, are not enrolled in shop committees of the various unions of the TUUL or in the TUUL minority

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groups inside AFL unions. The unemployed workers must also be drawn into the trade unions while simultaneously functioning in their Unemployed Councils. The trade unions are the most elementary forms of class organization based primarily on struggling to improve the economic interests of the workers. For this reason the embracing of these hundreds of thousands of workers into the TUUL unions—into shop committees—is the immediate and most far reaching method of bridging the gap.

This does not exhaust the possibilities. Around every specific issue (election campaign, unemployment, anti-war, Daily Worker, Gastonia, Anti-lynching, etc.) committees of action should be organized. These temporary committees of action should then systematically be broadened out to be integrated into a permanent form of TUUL shop committee. The united front tactics from below must be put into active operation and all practices of creating united fronts thru formal attachment of names must be abolished. In all of this activity the building of the Party must be an inseparable part. The recruiting of 25,000 new members of the Party by the end of the year must be made a reality.

We must judge our mass work not alone by the glint and glitter of the spontaneous response of the workers to our demonstrations or by mere record activities but essentially by the systematic, day to day "dirty" work in the factories, in the unions and mass organizations, in the struggles of the workers, winning influence in the shop, organization of shop committees, selling Daily Workers, organizing shop nuclei. *We must declare war against all remnants of the past which delights in record activities and campaigns and recognition must go only to those who organize and build lasting foundations of the revolutionary unions and the Party in the workshops.*

BASE MAIN ACTIVITY IN SHOPS

To carry thru all the Party tasks and campaigns most effectively necessitates constantly improved contact with the masses. The most permanent, as well as the most sensitive point of contact, is in the shop. Here we have the workers already organized by capitalism—here the worker feels the weight of the system of capitalism, in all its economic and political phases—here is where the Communist must function as a good agitator and organizer speaking to the shop mates, to and from work, at lunch time, at the bench, always linking up the shop problems with the outstanding political issues of the day, selling Daily Workers, distributing leaflets, organizing shop committees and also recruiting the most reliable workers into the Party and organizing a shop nucleus. Even with the unemployed the shop forms a point of contact (part time work, at employment offices, etc.) altho not the only one.

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Up till now the main characteristics of the Party campaigns are their failure to be organized inside the shop, instead of just the contrary being the case. In small cities we have nuclei whose life is completely barren—who are actually afraid to conduct organizational work as individuals inside the factory (individual agitation, distribution of leaflets, stickers, organization for improved conditions, etc.) or in an organized manner outside the factory (factory gate meetings, selling Daily Workers, distributing leaflets, stencilling walls, etc.). In larger cities where the importance of shop orientation is accepted, it is limited too much to distribution of leaflets, occasional shop gate meetings and Daily Worker selling and a limited number of shop papers, but the real basic work of creating organizational foundations inside the shops is not carried on.

This resistance to shop work, whether conscious or not, expresses itself in:

(a) Failure to establish any Action Committee in shops, either on March 6 or May 1 and unsatisfactory shop representation at united front conference on May 1.

(b) Bulk of new members recruited in Drive, not as result of shop work but from demonstrations and unemployed. Fact that some existing shop nuclei did not recruit a single new member.

(c) Only about 100 shop papers issued and these irregularly and the fact that not every shop nucleus issues shop papers (in Boston of 15 shop nuclei only 5 shop papers, in New York City of 13 shop nuclei only three shop papers, etc.).

(d) Failure to increase substantially circulation of Daily Worker by selling regularly at factory gates as well as insufficient workers correspondence.

(e) Insufficient tempo in TUUL Recruiting Drive. There are some shops where nuclei exist which have no shop committees and street nuclei that do not concentrate their efforts on specific shops.

(f) Only 146 shop nuclei embracing less than 10% of Party membership.

An examination of the present status of shop nuclei shows that there are 146 shop nuclei with a membership of 1219 or less than 10% of the Party membership. In some Districts a substantial section of the membership is reported as organized in shop or mine nuclei (Pittsburgh 45%, Detroit 22%) while in New York only 2% are in shop nuclei, or in Philadelphia, only 5%. We see the task ahead of us if we contrast this with the Party thesis which states:

> "As long as our Party is not anchored in the industrial establishments of the country, we cannot claim to be a Bolshevik Party. Every District is therefore obligated to transform the Party base systematically into one of shop nuclei. Within the year following the convention, over 40 per cent of the Party members must be organized into shop nuclei"

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This present situation exposes clearly the lack of understanding and appreciation of basing the Party in the workshops. Even these few existing shop nuclei, offer to the Party excellent possibilities for work—since they are located in basic industries (out of 130 analyzed we see: Mining 28, Metal and Steel 24; Auto 22; Textile 10; Railroad, Shoe and Leather, Shipyard, Needle 6 each; Rubber, Electric and Ammunition 4 each; Stockyards and Furniture 2 each, and a scattering of other individual industries) and in shops employing over 600,000 workers. However, we find that in some Districts they have only a nominal life with a theory that they can't do work because they will be fired and someone else must do the work; they get insufficient attention from the leading committees with no leading comrade attached to be responsible; they exist for years without recruiting a single new member or without issuing a bulletin, not to speak of active work inside the factory.

To carry thru the task set in the thesis necessitates that in every plan of work of each District there shall be included specific shops and industries where the Party will concentrate, both by sending comrades inside to work and thru outside efforts. Every Party member in the shop must carry thru active work there with the nucleus checking up and assisting him. A better check up of the membership must be instituted so comrades don't work in one shop without knowing each other or without the Party knowing of it. Giving the task of organizing a nucleus wherever a TUUL shop committee exists and improving the functioning of the existing nuclei by nursing their activity, attaching Party leaders, holding shop nuclei conferences, utilizing "Party Organizer" for exchange of opinions.

LIFE OF NUCLEI

To fundamentally change and improve the life and functioning of the Party nuclei is a burning problem. To this we can trace a considerable part of the reasons why the Party does not function effectively in its work and why so many of the new members have not been retained in the Party.

Firstly, the nuclei, both shop and street, are not organized as they should be. There are only these two basic forms of organization in the Communist Party; yet we have heard of "factory district nuclei" and "international branches," etc., until recently. Street nuclei are today in some districts not organized on basis of members living within a given territory, who are not members of shop nuclei, but members are attached regardless of where they live or work and sometimes on basis of friendship. Another example, is that the nuclei from all sections of the city, meet in one place with no relation to their base. The life of the nucleus would be equivalent

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to a city five thousand miles away, as far as the concentration of activity, discussion is concerned.

Such characteristic *bad* features of an average nucleus are:

(a) Only partial attendance, from 50 to 75%. Some members think if they are active in unions they need not attend the nucleus meetings, which is wrong.

(b) Meeting scheduled for 8, will start at 9. New members come at 8 and find door locked so go away and don't return.

(c) When meeting finally opens it takes up minutes, letters, four or five pages long are read, unending discussion over details of no importance takes place, all of which should have been disposed of by the Nucleus Executive and a summary and concrete proposals brought to the nucleus meeting.

d) Non-understandable language with abbreviations sounding like a new language to a new worker.

(e) Even now, selling of tickets and taking of collections, altho this is prohibited by the Central Committee, except distribution of tickets for Party affairs, to be sold among non-Party members.

(f) Failure to collect dues at the meeting.

(g) No nucleus initiative displayed unless there is a letter from the Section or District. In fact, reports tell of one nucleus which opened the meeting, the chairman announced no letters this week, therefore nothing to do and the nucleus adjourned.

These are just a few of the outstanding everyday events and thru them we see why the Party does not function to full capacity.

The nucleus which is the basic Party organ, the unit of membership and activity, where everyone must attend, does not function as a generator of activity nor as a driving force to carry thru the Party campaigns. Some nuclei try to overcome their difficulties by disciplining comrades. It is correct to use discipline but to get to the root of the problem means to radically improve the political and organizational life of the nucleus—improve the content of the meetings, and discipline will be only for the passive and opportunist inclined elements.

Also the nucleus executive must assume its real duties.

The shop nucleus must be organized on a basis of several Party members working in one shop. The street nucleus must be organized on a basis of members (not in shop nuclei) living within certain area, belonging to one nucleus and conducting their activity in that area. Special exceptional forms will not be discussed here. The nucleus must be the basic unit of Party life and activity. All campaigns and tasks must be discussed and every member alloted to work which is a part of the plan of action of every nucleus. The work of every individual member must be part of an organized whole, so that the nucleus work will be a complete whole.

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In addition to the campaigns of the Party the nuclei must (under the directives of the Agitprop) discuss general problems of current political interest. This is totally neglected at present. As an example a delegate to a recent Section Convention in New York City made a motion to prevent all members from attending Workers' Clubs as they don't attend their nuclei meetings. A rank and file member explained why he preferred the club to the nucleus, then explained that he was interested in knowing about the Five Year Plan and about World Unemployment and the club had lectures on these but the nucleus never discussed them. Here we see vividly the need of improving the agitprop work of the nuclei.

The deadly routine must be reduced to a minimum. This can be done thru a functioning nucleus executive committee which meets regularly before every nucleus meeting, takes up all letters, directives, works out proposals for the nucleus, arranges the agenda, arranges for reporters if necessary, makes proposals as to activity, reports on checking up of activity of every member, reports on dues standing of nucleus, etc. Dues sales must be an important function and a capable comrade must be financial secretary whose duty it is to keep after the members and collect dues—not wait until the members come and pay dues.

The nucleus must establish regularity of meeting and involve every single member in work. Every nucleus must have one or two factories which it is concentrating upon as well as carrying thru all the general political tasks of the Party.

DISTRICT AND SECTION LEADERSHIP

To carry into life the directives of the Central Committee and to develop and be responsible for the political and organizational activities and functioning of the Party and all its sub-divisions, we have 16 District Committees at the present time. In order to carry thru its function the District Committee should meet regularly to discuss the Party activities and work out new directives.

The present District Committees have not fulfilled all the requirements. This is primarily due to their election at the last conventions which were factional conventions, where members were elected not on the exclusive basis of political capacity for leadership but primarily on the basis of factional considerations. Furthermore, committees were elected whose size prevented them from functioning as active leading political bodies. Experience of the past year has shown that instead of District Committee Plenums being the leading political body of the Party, where all members participate in formulating and discussing Party policy, many times it was only an enlarged Buro meeting where the active

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Buro members discussed amongst themselves to a large forum of spectators.

Furthermore, we find that the District Committees many times became stone walls between the center and the basic nuclei. Directives given are either never transmitted to the Section or Nuclei, or if transmitted, are taken bodily as given by the Central Committee, without trying in any way to adopt them specifically to the District and concretizing them. The Districts also fail to establish a functioning apparatus, involving many comrades, so that there develops one man departments, which do not function or give leadership and certainly do not know the pulse of life and activity of the lower organs. All of this must be changed at the coming convention and at the coming convention the District Committees must be so elected and constructed so as to fulfill its political function.

The incoming District Committees and consequently the Buros must be reduced in size to guarantee and establish their leading position and regular functioning in the everyday life and work of the Party. Around these leading committees other comrades must be involved in departments and committees.

In choosing the leading committees we must emphasize:

(a) Political competency based on attitude towards and understanding of Party line, tasks and campaigns plus active participation in all phases of Party work.

(b) Capacity to function actively in Party work.

(c) Inclusion of proletarians now working in shops. Their election based not alone on fact of being proletarians but this, plus activity and capacity to give Party leadership. Essential consideration is the connection with masses and capacity to reflect and understand struggles and problems and utilize this in giving Party leadership.

(d) Similarly drawing in of Negro, youth and women, not based merely on these categories but on ability and work.

(e) Including new elements (not new members necessarily) who have proven ability thru work in lower Party organs and in mass work and mass organizations.

In Districts the size of those in the American Party, it is impossible to give sufficient detailed attention to every nucleus which might be scattered over a territory from 50 to 500 miles. To overcome this it is necessary to establish Section Committees, as the means of giving daily detailed attention and leadership to the Party work in specific areas. Up till now we have had some of our most important Districts without adequate Section Committees (Ohio, Pittsburgh, Seattle). The Section Committees must be established to cover a specific area, such as Philadelphia already has (3 sections in city of Philaderphia, Chester region, Baltimore region, Lehigh

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Valley, Trenton region, Anthracite). These must carry thru the Party campaigns and activities, develop all phases of work, particularly mass work and factory nuclei, develop the ideological understanding and activity of members and control and check all activities, always reporting to the District Committee. The Section Committees are the key in many Districts to radically changing the passivity and insufficient activity in major industrial areas.

All leading committees must actually participate more in the work of the lower organizations and give direct guidance. All members of the District Committees must be attached to shop nuclei. Circular leadership should be reduced to a minimum and more personal leadership with elimination of all bureaucratic tendencies. This in no way lessens the leading role of the District Buro, but on the contrary strengthens it and establishes a better understanding and link with the entire Party.

The failure to establish functioning departments explains why insufficient guidance is given to carrying thru Party campaigns and tasks. The Departments are instruments of the Buro for preparing material and carrying thru Buro decisions in all their specific phases. No District has satisfactory functioning departments. Generally they are one man affairs which are not departments. A department should be a group of capable comrades selected by the Buro, with a responsible Buro member as head which not only talks about the problems but actually participates in carrying them thru. Stability must also be introduced from this convention on, with less changing of leading functionaries from one post to another. The best functioning District departments are the Organization Departments and these are very lame. Other departments (Agitprop, Negro, Women, Trade Union) are entirely unsatisfactory. For instance seven districts (Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Seattle, Connecticut, Alabama) have no Agitprop Departments at all. From now on there must be established the five basic departments of every District Committee (Organization, Trade Union, Agitprop, Negro and Women). These must meet regularly and give guidance in their field of work, always reporting to the District Buro and having their work coordinated thru the District Secretariat and Organization Department.

RECRUITING AND KEEPING NEW MEMBERS

The recent Recruiting Drive with its 6,000 new members was only an indication of the possibility to recruit new members. We succeeded in that task but the more difficult task of keeping and involving these new members we are not succeeding in satisfactorily.

The recent Drive must be considered only as a beginning—especially when we consider the great gap between our political in-

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fluence and organizational strength, which has to be narrowed down by building the Party. Towards this aim, the Central Committee decided that recruiting must be continued, not as a special drive, but as an everyday task, linked up with every campaign—with everyday work of the Party—setting as a goal a total of 25,000 new members recruited during 1930. Every district must orientate itself in this direction.

The methods to be used in recruiting are important. During the Drive the outstanding weakness was recruiting largely from demonstrations of unemployed and mass meetings with absolutely insufficient recruiting from factories and trade unions. This shortcoming must be regarded seriously and the main efforts of recruiting must be in the factories and mass organization. Experience shows that the latter stick to the Party better.

A complete analysis of how successful we were in keeping the new members is not available. However, sufficient information is at hand to indicate a serious situation in the Party. During the Drive every District wanted to make a good record—to reach its quota. Some became so zealous (New York, Philadelphia, etc.), that they even reported applications instead of accepted new members. The Comintern during the Drive raised sharply to the Party the problem of keeping new members in the following cable:

> "Rapid influx new members raises before Party the task of their organization in the factory and street nuclei whose activity must be raised, thru drawing them into daily practical Party work and organizing for them short Party course and bringing the most capable into Party schools stop Without such work directed towards meeting the requirements of the new members and keeping them in the Party, a considerable part will inevitably withdraw stop *Recruiting campaign would thus not only prove valueless but would also compromise Party in eyes of working masses.*"

The Central Committee followed this up with numerous letters, instructions, resolutions and figures, but the District Committees have absolutely failed in their capacities as leaders to adhere to these directives. Some Districts (New York, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Detroit, Chicago, Minneapolis) thought it was not proper to severely criticize them for the disparity between their reported new members and the number of initiation stamps bought, but this was a good criterion. During the 10 weeks of the campaign there were 6,167 new members reported. During the same period there were only slightly more than 3,000 initiation stamps sold. If we add another month to allow for slowness in taking in new members we reach 3,600. Dues, altho increasing, are still unsatisfactory and do not reflect sufficiently the new members. Some examples in New York disclose vividly the situation: Section Organizer of Section Five was

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given 217 applications in February. 3 months later he still had 180 applications in his possession, which means that no real effort was put into the work of drawing these new applicants into the Party. In another section, (eight) out of 130 application cards, the section still had 91 on hand, altho in this case they had attempted to reach all these applicants.

Finally, returns from five Districts of a questionaire on this question gives the following alarming information:

	Claimed recruited	Sold initiations during same period	Number of new recruits in Party today
Boston	302	215	80
New York City	1450	800	738
Philadelphia	447	120	200
Cleveland	668	276	350
Kansas City	50	35	20
	2917	1446	1388

These partial figures certainly should cause every District to pause and examine their work and take the necessary measures to sharply change this situation. There is already the basis for a new resolution evaluating the capacity of each District in carrying thru this more difficult task, than merely reporting the recruiting of new members.

These new members have been lost because the directives of the Central Committee have not been carried out. Firstly, the methods of recruiting were not the best. Secondly, not sufficient energetic steps were taken to personally go after each applicant—establish personal contact with him. The nuclei did not take the proper steps to involve them into active Party work and did not establish sufficient classes of training courses. Even now, steps should be taken to overcome this on the basis of the Central Committee Plenum resolution on "Keeping the New Members."

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Some Problems in the Building of District Leadership

By JACK STACHEL

"LEADERSHIP is a necessary condition for any common action, but most of all it is indispensable in the greatest fight in the world's history. The organization of the Communist Party is the organization of Communist leadership in the proletarian revolution.

"To be a good leader the Party itself must have a good leadership. Accordingly the principal task of our organization work must be the education, organization and training of efficient Communist Parties under capable directing organs to the leading places in the proletarian revolutionary movement.

"The leadership in the revolutionary class struggle presupposes the organic combination of the greatest possible striking force and the greatest adaptability on the part of the Communist Party and its leading organs to the ever changing conditions of the struggle. Furthermore successful leadership requires absolutely the closest association with the proletarian masses. Without such association the leadership will not lead the masses, but, at best, will follow behind the masses." (From the 3rd Congress of the Comintern).

If we examine the leadership in the Districts of our Party the light of the above quotation from the thesis on organization, adopted at the third Congress of the Comintern, we must admit that we have a most serious problem before us in the training and building up of the leadership in the Districts. We must also admit that heretofore very little attention was given to the training of such leadership. In the past the leadership in the Districts was of course, like thruout the Party, not built on the basis of capacity for Communist leadership. Thruout the period prior to the Address of the Comintern one of the major considerations was the corrupt factionalism that prevailed in the Party. It is only now that our Party has begun the "training of the Party in the spirit of politics based upon the principle of the training of cadres in the spirit of honest proletarian, uncorrupt revolutionism, free from false diplomacy and unprincipled combinations." (Stalin)

MUST TRAIN NEW FORCES.

But the progress made since the Address of the Comintern has not been rapid enough. There are many reasons for this. On the

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one hand the fact that we were in many instances confronted with taking new elements that, tho capable and good revolutionaries, in the past because of the factional regime in the Party were kept out of leading work and they lacked experience and are now undergoing a period of training. On the other hand a conservatism and reluctance towards the drawing of new proletarian elements into leadership prevails in our Party organizations. The desertion of the renegades from our Party in the present period of the sharpening of the class struggle which, on the one hand, requires more and more active forces and at the same time brings on the fierce terror of the government, thus robbing us of many leading elements, all this makes it obligatory that we pay the utmost attention to the training of new forces for leading work. These forces can be obtained by the systematic promotion of workers from the ranks who show capacity for leadership, and by the development and training of workers who show capacity for leadership in the various struggles in the factories, strikes, demonstrations, etc.

GAP BETWEEN CENTER AND DISTRICT.

What is the condition of our leading forces in the Districts? It can be said that the expulsion of the renegades from the Party, the whole orientation of the Party on the line of the Comintern has resulted in a strengthening of our forces due to the correct line and collective work. The elimination of factionalism has multiplied our strength manifold in the leading cadres. Also there is observed a greater revolutionary responsibility among the leading cadres as well as thruout the Party. But at the same time we have not yet overcome the tremendous gap that exists politically between the Districts and the Central Committee. This is perhaps the most serious problem that we must face in the leadership of our Districts. There is very little direct political initiative in the Districts. Not much serious discussion of the political problems either as laid down by the CC for the Party as a whole or in the application to the District work.

It is impossible to attain a real improvement in the leadership in the District and in the quality in the work without overcoming to a large extent this gap. The center can not be stronger than the totality of the Districts politically, for unless the Districts are in a position to put into the practical results the line of the Central Committee the line will remain on paper and no matter how correct, the Party will fail to win the masses. It is therefore one of the most important and urgent tasks of the moment to strengthen the leadership of the Districts politically.

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MUST RAISE POLITICAL LEVEL.

How can this be achieved? To begin with the center must send more comrades trained in the Center to the Districts. This does not necessarily mean that the Center should be weakened. On the contrary. It must be strengthened. Without a strong Center there can be no talk about the improvement in the Districts. But comrades trained in the Center can be sent into the Districts. This can be achieved in a number of ways, including the training of comrades in the Center for a short time as workers in the various departments and then sent into the Districts. We could even follow the practice of taking from the Districts for a short period comrades to work in the center in various departments and then to be sent back to their respective Districts. In this manner the comrades coming from the Districts already having a certain amount of practical experience will be able to learn a great deal thru working in the Center and thru contact with the leading committees and functionaries. The Workers School—the central Party training school—must of course be utilized much more than heretofore to provide training in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism for the leading comrades in the Districts, the majority of whom could profit immensly by such training.

INSTRUCTORS.

The system of instructors from the Central Committee must be developed. It must pass from an occasional visit to the regular and systematic sending of instructors to the Districts not merely for a few days, but for many weeks and months. The Party plenums, conventions and the various conferences organized in connection with these gatherings must be utilized much more than in the past for the bringing of the leading functionaries of the Districts for participation in the solution and discussion of the various Party problems. In addition there could be organized regional conferences of functionaries to include a number of nearby Districts to take up the various campaigns as they are launched. This would help to give a better and more uniform understanding of the campaign.

The Center must give more conscious guidance to the Districts. In this respect the various political letters of the Agitprop Department, the improvement of the Communist, and the improved editorials in the Daily Worker are an important step in this direction. But much more could be done particularly by giving more concrete guidance to the political problems that arise in the Districts.

MUST FOLLOW EVENTS.

Finally the Party must stimulate the leading functionaries to constantly pay attention to their political development. There is too

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little studying of the fundamentals of Marxism and Leninism among the ranks of our functionaries. Very few follow the important international and national events. Even the Inprecorr and the Communist are only read by a small number. We must thru a better division of work in the Districts make it possible for our leading functionaries to read and study the experiences of our Party and the Comintern while engaged in the practical every day work.

DEVELOPMENT OF INITIATIVE.

W must pay more attention to the development of the initiative of the Districts, and to concretization of the directives of the Central Committee in the light of local situations and problems. At the present time coming into the District Committee of any District one could sit for hours and listen to the discussion of many campaigns and unless one knows in advance in what city and District he is, he will not learn it from the discussions and decisions made in his presence. One will hear of the Daily Worker, the TUUL, the Defense of the Soviet Union, and numerous other campaigns taken up, but each one taken up without any relation to the local conditions but are mere duplicates of the center, usually with the addition that they contain important deviations from the line of the Party. This condition must be remedied.

The Districts must take up and react to the local political and industrial conditions of their territory. The leadership in the Districts must stop dealing with generalities and apply the directives of the Center to the local problems. This requires that the leading forces in the Districts follow the events in their locality. It requires keeping tab on the developments inside the factories, the meetings of the legislature, the city councils, etc., the activities of the A. F. of L., the social-fascist groups etc. Without watching the activities of the enemy, without knowing at each stage the conditions and moods of the workers we can not fulfill the role of Communist leadership.

MUST STUDY LOCAL CONDITIONS

In the development of local initiative we must guard against excessive centralization. This does not in the least mean the weakening of discipline or the principle of democratic centralism on which our Party is based. On the contrary there must be an even stronger discipline in our ranks and centralization. But what is required is that the Districts do not get the habit that everything must be ready made in the center for them. At the present time the districts wait for the Central Committee to lay down every campaign, every activity, to decide on the details of every question. They wait for the Central Committee to send them outlines, appeals,

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leaflets, and other printed material. Such excessive centralization while it has its good sides in the fact that the Central Committee is assured that the line of the Party will be carried thru in the material printed and distributed and that there will be a certain economical advantage in the fact that the Center can print leaflets and other material in large quantities, nevertheless also it has very bad sides.

Among the minor considerations, tho very important, is the fact that the material usually comes late and is not adapted to the local conditions. But the main danger lies in the fact that such excessive centralization robs the Districts of the initiative that must be developed. The Districts get the habit of waiting for material, of not adopting the agitational material to the local conditions. Such a condition, always bad, becomes very dangerous during the periods of the intensification of the class struggle, when in spite of the excellent means of communication, the Districts are in danger of being isolated from the center. The leadership in the District must therefore be prepared to act independently and on its own responsibility when the occasion requires within the limits of the decisions of the Central Committee. Unless this is done we run the danger that in the most important and trying periods the leadership in the Districts will be found unprepared, and thus fail to perform the tasks imposed upon it.

ELECTION OF NEW DISTRICT COMMITTEES

In the past while our District Committees and Buros were large and thus gave the appearance of broad leadership, in reality they were very narrow. The District Committee in reality was not the leading body and merely met occasionally and served only to approve the work carried on for many months. The Buros likewise, tho large, were not composed of the best forces that could really give leadership to the work. Most of the comrades on these committees having been chosen prior to the Comintern Address included many who thru their qualification politically, thru their participation in the work of the Party and their contact with the masses were not the type that actually composed the leadership in the district, but rather became "leaders" only thru the fact that they were members of the leading committees. Such a state of affairs did not contribute to the building up of the authority of the District leadership.

The selection of the leadership of the Districts at the coming conventions must be, as instructed by the Central Committee, on the basis of "the political competency of the comrades, based on their attitude towards the principal questions of the Party line, tasks and campaigns during the past period, plus an understanding of the func-

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tioning of the Party organization and active participation in all phases of the Party work and activities." The reduction of the size of the leading committees and its selection on the basis of the directives of the Central Committee will improve the authority and composition of the leading committees and make it possible for them to really be the actual leadership and not only in name as hitherto. The reduction in the size of the committees by no means signifies a narrowing of the leadership. Just the opposite is the truth. The District Committees will become really leading political bodies and actually establish a broad leadership. They will draw in capable and active comrades into the various committees and departments where these comrades will be carrying on important work every day and not merely be members of "honorary committees" that meet perhaps two or three times a year.

BUILDING AN APPARATUS

In the building up of the District leadership we must begin to create a nucleus of full time Party workers who will devote all their time to the work of the Party and assure permanency and continuity to the work. In most of the Districts such a nucleus does not exist at the present time. In most Districts the District organizer alone is devoting all the time to Party work and often even without a technical worker. Without such a nucleus it is very difficult to create the necessary division of work and to build up the various departments. Just as there exists a tremendous gap politically between the Central Committee and the Districts, so here in the Party apparatus this gap is great despite the fact that the apparatus of the Center is also small and can be strengthened. How can this be overcome? In the first place, every District must secure the necessary technical assistance so that the District Organizer does not spend most of his time performing the function of a technical worker. Then we must begin to secure full time workers for at least the most important departments. Often the District can not at first afford to have more than one paid functionary—the District Organizer.

Where possible, efforts must be made to raise funds and to build up the Party apparatus. But even where this is not possible the problem can be solved.

A competent Daily Work agent, if on the job, can build up enough of a circulation to finance his work, and thru the drawing in of comrades who work in the factories to assist him, such a comrade can be entrusted either as head or as permanent worker to build up the Agitprop Department. Similarly with the literature department, with the Labor Unity, etc. Also there are in many of the auxiliaries and language organizations in most Districts com-

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rades who are full time workers. These comrades must be utilized to strengthen the Party apparatus. In addition to this the departments must be strengthened by drawing in comrades from the factories to work in various departments. These comrades must be drawn in not merely as members of committees to make decisions but actually as workers in the departments. By drawing in such comrades for actual work in the departments we will be able to train competent Party workers. At the same time by having at least one comrade in every department who works for the Party or one of the other organizations, we will help to give stability to the work of the department.

In this manner we can carry thru a real division of labor, build up functioning departments. At the present time most of the departments in the Districts are at best "legislative" committees and the District Organizer is compelled to carry out all the tasks and very often neglects this work because he can not perform it all.

ACTIVIZATION OF MEMBERSHIP

The strengthening of the District leadership does not consist in merely strengthening the leading committees and the District apparatus. The leading committees and the departments must be organically connected with the membership and the mass of the workers. This must be achieved thru the building up of the Section Committees and the apparatus in the Sections. A real division of work and departmentalization must be carried down to the nuclei. The whole membership must be activized. Each comrade must be assigned the work best fitted for.

> "The art of Communist organization lies in the ability of making use of each and every one for the proletarian class struggle; of distributing the Party work amongst all the Party members, and of constantly attracting thru its members ever wider masses of the proletariat to the revolutionary movement; further it must hold the direction of the whole movement in its hand not by virtue of its might, but by its authority, energy, greater experience, greater all around knowledge and capabilities." (Comintern 3rd Congress).

In this spirit the District leadership must strive to head the Party membership and the mass struggles. In this spirit must come the recognition of the place of every member and every worker in the revolutionary struggle. In this spirit we must train not only the leading cadres but every Party member for leadership among the masses. This must be achieved thru the assignment of definite work to every member and the training of every Party member in the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, thru classes established in the Districts and cities, thru the convening of conferences of the active workers, thru every day attention to the work of the

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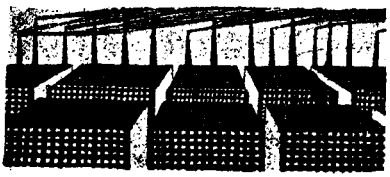
lower organizations and particular attention to the work of the factory nuclei from which we must draw a larger portion of our leading cadres than we have thus far.

STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPORTUNISM

The strengthening and the building up of the District leadership can not be achieved without the control of all activities and their execution. A thoro self-criticism of all errors and deviations and a sharp struggle against all manifestations of opportunism both in the leading committees and in the Party work as a whole. The low political level of the District leadership has in the past made it possible for gross errors to be committed, a wrong line followed for some time, until it came to the attention of the CC. Thoro self criticism will help to develop the political level of the leadership and thus will sharpen the struggle against all Right deviations. On the other hand the raising of the political level will lead to less mistakes being made and the quick correction of errors in the lower organizations, the elimination of those elements exposing themselves as unfit for leadership in the present period. Thus far we could note a too tolerant attitude to mistakes merely because the comrades who persistently made the errors professed to accept the line of the Party.

In the carrying out of a better division of work while we must encourage the specialization of functions, and train comrades to become experts in their tasks, we must guard against "one sidedness," the development of "special interests" unrelated to the main tasks of the Party. We must guard against a wrong "practicalism" which will look upon the taking up of all broad political questions and problems as something interfering with their work, as something diverting the energies of the Party into "unproductive" spheres. Such an attitude must be guarded against and the comrades must be trained in a real spirit of Leninism.



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New Trends of Agriculture and the Crisis in the U. S.

By T. LOUF-BOGEN

ONE of the basic factors which contributed to the emergence and appearance of the present crisis in the U. S. may be found in the difficult export situation of individual products intended for mass exportation, headed by agricultural products such as wheat, cotton, tobacco, but comprehending also copper and manufactured goods. This condition may be traced back to early spring, which had its reaction on various agricultural products that touched the lowest levels since 1924 as for instance wheat. This difficulty reflected among other things the critical condition in the principal consuming countries of Europe, whose purchasing power suffered in the first place in consequence of the lack of new loans from the U. S. for some time; secondly, by reason of the outflow of their own capital to the U. S. intent upon participating in the speculation mania on the stock exchange. However that may be, the position of agricultural exports and of agriculture in general for the spring and summer of 1929 was once more intensely critical.

At the same time a political fight arose and matured in the country about new farm legislation that had made its appearance as the outcome of the last presidential elections, but which had assumed a new and stronger coloring, or rather trend, in consequence of the crisis and in part in consequence of the sharp battle on the proposed tariff legislation.

It is well known that under the pressure of the farmers block in the Republican party, Hoover called a special session of Congress to work out and submit new legislation for the marketing of agricultural products which were once for all to put an end to the farmers agitation for the notorious McNary-Haughen bill and still give some kind of satisfaction to the farm states. That session of Congress saw the passing of the Agricultural Marketing Act and the establishment of a special Federal Farm Board with wide powers in the field of furthering the activities of already existing cooperatives and of those to be newly established with a view to organizing more rational marketing of agricultural products; for that the immense sum of half a billion dollars was placed at the disposal of the board. Let us touch at the outset on the crisis in the marketing of agricultural products during the current year.

Starting with spring of 1929 prices of wheat underwent tremen-

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dous fluctuations with a generally waning tendency. The decline began as early as March; in May a sharp fall occurred which continued up to the beginning of June with prices at times falling below the "critical" line of the dollar bushel, which is below the pre-war level. In general and mainly under the influence of the assistance anticipated from the measures taken by Congress and the government, prices rose no less than 20c a bushel; this rise continued even throughout July, which was explained by the prospect of bad crops in the country and the worsening of the Canadian crops. However, at the time when farmers habitually turn over their crops to the elevators for storage or sell them and when the heavy grain freights began to move to the marketing points and ports, wheat stocks were thrown overboard under forced selling amounting to a panic in spots, which resulted in an unbelievable glutting at the markets and points of embarkation, all of which was strongly reflected in the price of wheat. The reasons for this phenomenon should be sought on the one hand in the large supplies of wheat still on hand from 1928; on the other hand in the specious policy of the speculating and sabotaging big privately-owned elevators that wanted to coerce the farmers to sell the wheat rather than hand it in for storage. There resulted a condition of affairs where prices in Canada were at times 30c and more above the American prices and farmers in districts bordering on Canada found it profitable to pay the Canadian duty of 12c a bushel, and sell their wheat to Canada. Let us note that the new fall in prices of wheat was a result of the stock exchange collapse, thus disclosing the close interlocking of speculation in stocks and in commodities. Although wheat was not thrown upon the market with the same recklessness as securities, still many speculators in wheat began hastily to sell out options on wheat to save their securities from forced sale on the part of their stock brokers. In the course of time prices rose somewhat, but without significance. Even the Farm Board and the huge "stabilization" body established by it for the granting of credits and the marketing of wheat, the so-called "Farmers National Grain Corporation," with its capital of $20,000 could help mattters but little. The publication of the well-known Canadian wheat pool, the "United Farmers of Alberta" reports that:

> "the Federal Farm Board was overwhelmed with telegraphic appeals for help, crying out for relief from the situation that had been created for the last few weeks. Propositions were even submitted carrying the suggestion that the Board supply boats, load them with wheat, haul them out to sea, and keep them under anchor until the market improve."

The limits of this article do not permit us to stop to investigate the separate causes that called forth the lengthy crisis of the wheat

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market in the United States, or to determine more closely the exact weight to be attached to such factors as over-production and the absence in the United States of a strong cooperative organization, such as the well-known Canadian wheat "pool" of the farmers, the existence of immense intermediate capital, the growing competition of other producing countries, and likewise the conditions in consuming countries headed by Europe (lack of American credits, money crisis, etc.); we wish to observe, however, that the rapid gathering and the rapid delivery of wheat this year were the outcome, among other things, of the growth of the *mechanization of agricultural production*, and in this case the increased utilization of *combines* in the harvesting of the crops.

The critical condition also existed in the cotton market. As in the case of wheat, the fall in the price of cotton can be traced to the excess supplies that accumulated in the first place in consequence of the *increase in the offerings on the market* in 1929 by 560,000 bales more than the previous year; secondly, the consequence of the *decrease in demand* by spinning mills *abroad* of more than 400,000 bales. This dual pressure naturally was reflected in the prices and compelled the Farm Board to tackle likewise the urgent task of the support of cotton. It is of interest to note that the cotton question is a reflection of the Anglo-American imperialist struggle, in which England is endeavoring to free itself from dependence upon the United States with respect to cotton and in isolated cases even to squeeze out American cotton from its markets. Those familiar with the cotton question remark upon the growth of competition in the world market and the pressure upon American prices of ordinary as well as high quality cotton from India and Egypt, while the specific weight of American cotton is on the ebb among world supplies. Howsoever that be, with the advent of the rescuing Farm Board a campaign was initiated by the cotton growers for financial support. Thus, the governor of the State of Texas was pressing the Board to compensate the Texan cotton growers who had listened to the advice of the Board and to the predictions of higher prices and had refrained from selling their stocks, while at the time that the Board announced its stabilized minimum cotton price, the latter was at the beginning of November already $7.50 a bale under that minimum.

If we supplement what has been said about wheat and cotton by a few observations bearing on the prices of other agricultural products such as meat and dairy products, concerning which even the highly colored *Wall Street Journal*, mouthpiece of the stock market, must admit that the supplies of meat and dairy products *established a record* for this time of the year (December 9th), and the chairman of the Farm Board was compelled to declare that the

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"fall in price for cattle brought losses to the farmers," then we can get an approximate picture of the especially acute critical condition of agriculture for the current season and of the setting in which the Farm Board was compelled to begin its activity.

The fact that the activities of the Farm Board and of the immense credit and operating associations being established by it for the regulation of the marketing of various agricultural products(wheat, cotton, fruits and the like) commenced just at the time when the general crisis was approaching and became as it were part of Hoover's general "plan" for the averting or weakening of the results of the present-day crisis, afforded grounds to various comrades for considering the board and its activities only in connection with and from the angle of that crisis, instead of seeing in them also a noteworthy stage in the devolopment of the post-war crisis in agriculture in the United States, and in that connection to find the specific importance to be attached to that step in the development of these indisputable tendencies of big capital in this branch of economy, which tendencies we will set forth hereinafter.

It must be stated, however, that the Farm legislation itself was wholly necessitated by, and adopted in its present form, as we shall show immediately, as the result of a compromise; moreover, the real tendency of big capital with reference to American agriculture, and its real program, as yet not definite but still clearly shaping itself, is not a government subsidy to farmers' cooperatives, but the development of forms of big capital in the production of American agriculture. We shall take occasion to discuss more in detail later on the development of these tendencies and of this program during the last few years. Now, for a few words concerning the character of the present Farm legislation. This is the more necessary as the social-democratic press sees in the adoption of this legislation new proof of the "plannedness" of capitalism in the present period. Thus, for instance, the Berlin *Vorwaerts* of June 23rd writes:

> "One must really wonder at the extent of the 'consciously planned economy' (emphasis in the original) which proceeds from this American Farm loan. Even Germany could learn something from it."

Besides, several American reformers, as for instance the well-known journalist Stuart Chase, remarking upon the ripening predominance of big capital enterprise and their methods in American agriculture, would like to see, in the development of farmers' cooperatives for the *marketing* of products, a means for the *preponderance* of the tendency towards a big capitalist form (that is, share holding or corporative form) in American agriculture and a form

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of transition to socialized agriculture. Chase writes as follows in the well-known magazine, *The Nation*:

> "There is but one possible compromise which *may or may not* have a successful issue.... By means of strong cooperative associations, having at their disposal sufficient credit reserves, the farmers can regulate production by holding down the area under cultivation within pre-arranged limits and can maintain prices at a fair level. This makes room for a proposition that farmers may even acquire and utilize machines cooperatively, tilling their own fields and the neighbors' lands as one whole. That is about the same thing as the farmers are doing in Russia. This means the end of traditional individualism but not necessarily the end of the farmer himself. Culture will undergo deep changes under the influence of cooperation but it will not be uprooted. Ford's scheme would uproot it."

We see what pictures of idyllic development are being drawn by high-spirited liberal economists in connection with the cooperative development among the farmers, especially under the influence of the present agrarian legislation. The idea would never occur to Chase that there is proportionately as great a distance between the development in the USSR and that in the United States as there is between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

We already pointed out the fact that the present legislation was adopted under the pressure of farmers, politicians and their henchmen in the Republican Party and bears the earmarks of a compromise as to its program. This character of the measures taken can be gathered also from a recital of the facts that lately gave rise to these measures. The act "governing the marketing of farm products" passed in June, 1923, was the result of a compromise between Hoover's government which expressed the viewpoint of big capital and which had come out strongly against the famous McNary-Haughen Bill, and political wire-pullers of the farmers in the Republican Party, who had fought for that bill. The law was passed after two *fundamental* principles of the bill had been thrown out at the insistence of Hoover, namely the so-called "equalization fee" and certain farm export premiums. It is of interest to note that even that was not easy for Hoover to attain. When the Senate Committee on agriculture asked for his opinion on the question of export premiums, Hoover came out categorically against their inclusion in the bill. Despite this fact, the Senate included them in the bill passed by it and this measure was excluded from the bill solely on the insistence of the lower House. We may observe in passing that the Senate subsequently included this measure all the same in the shape of a rider attached to one of the paragraphs of the tariff bill that meanwhile had been scotched.

Yet, at the same time, these measures constitute the very "cream"

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so to speak of the farmers' demands. Around the "equalization fee" (by virtue of which the farmers' export organization would have the right to allocate losses incurred by the sale of farmers products abroad at *dumping prices* in a compulsory sequence among all producing farmers who place the given product upon the market) a steady fight has been going on for several years. How Hoover's refusal was sized up by farming folks may in some measure be judged by the following deliberations appearing in one of the farmers' newspapers, the *Kansas Farmers' Union*, the mouthpiece of about the most advanced farmers' organization, the *Farmers' Union*. This paper writes:

> "Aiding agriculture without a true inclusion of the farmer in the present tariff system is nothing but big phrase-mongering. To effect such an inclusion the adoption of the *equalization fee* or equivalent measures is necessary. Telling us that we will get what we need by means of *organization* or *cooperation* is nothing but empty words.... The Canadian wheat pool with its large membership and distinct success and experience figures on having been able to raise the world price of wheat by only 2 to 4 cents a bushel..the farmers by themselves cannot organize so successfully as to obtain for themselves the results that could be achieved by the passing of the McNary-Haughen Bill...."

And so, the farmers' organizations were straining to obtain full compulsory control over the marketing by farmers (the "valorization" plan) at the very time when big capital, speaking through the government and the press of big business were decisively rejecting the plan.

It is true that the Farm Board now in principle brings all farmers' organizations concerned within the orbit of its governmental tutalage and assists in the establishment of new farmers' cooperatives, but a good deal of this originates under pressure from the farmers themselves. Moreover, a definite intention on the part of the farmers' organizations may now be noted to take into their own hands the leadership in the doings of all enterprises now being established for the marketing of farm products and even of the Farm Board itself. Thus, at the opening of the National Grange, a conservative farmers' organization, in November 1929, the chairman, Tabor, said:

> "Agricultural organization and leaders must be on their guard against the establishment of a tendency to permit governmental bodies to supply leadership, dictate policy or supply the initiative in the matter of agricultural progress."

In a similar manner at a recent meeting of the Farmers' Union mention was made in a report of the fact that thanks to the insistence of that organization several sections were thrown out of the gov-

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ernment's draft of the bill on the Farm Board which would have cut down the free development of Farmers' cooperatives.

But the knot of capitalist contradictions will come openly to the surface right after the passing of the law in the fight centering about the policies of the Farm Board. On the one hand we have noticeable pressure upon the government on the part of the "agrarians." It became outspoken first in connection with the appointments to the Farm Board exercised for creating definite pressure on the credit and price policies of the Board. When the ranking members of the Board expressed themselves first in the Senate to the effect that farmers should not rely upon government aid in the raising of prices for their products by holding back their surplus from the market, the Senate Committee on agriculture took advantage of its prerogative to confirm Hoover's nominees and secure changes in the credit policy from the members of the Farm Board.

However, this more liberal credit policy and veritable screwing-up of agricultural prices and the unfolding of far-reaching plans for the organization of the marketing of agricultural products on the part of the Farm Board encountered a very unfriendly reception at the hands of big capital. Thus banking interests fear the accummulation of new non-liquid (frozen) credits by reason of the too rosy calculations of the Farm Board upon the course of prices for the agricultural supplies on hand that were being kept off the market. But the dissatisfaction of the big speculators and dealers in grain and in other agricultural products was especially pronounced as they, following the leadership of the well-known operator, Julius Barnes (who is by the way the chairman of the crisis committee set up by Hoover and thus embodies in one person the contradictions of Hoover's "planned" economy) made representations to Hoover against the activities of the Farm Board.

These events took place in the middle of December. Hoover's position on this question had as yet not become clear. But his position became partly evident from the fact that the government called a halt to the Farm Board whose activities had "gone too far" on the question touching that protest. The point at issue was the erection of new grain warehouses for storing wheat, supported by the farmers in lieu of the low market price, until such time as prices would assume a more favorable aspect on the market. In the present year, as we have remarked, the elevator capacity has proven insufficient for storing of the wheat supplies. Altho it is too late to undertake anything with reference to the present crop, farming circles are exerting themselves to obtain credits from the board to build new elevators, and in view of this the Department of Agriculture hastened to present to the Farm Board a report in which it *warns* the Board against such a construction program.

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The Department calls attention to the fact that the situation that had arisen during the current year wih the holding back of grains is *abnormal;* that it arose, as is well known, in consequence of record hold-overs from last year, and in consequence of traders and speculators withholding sales of wheat in the expectation of better prices. By its warning the Department of Agriculture gave notice in an unmistakable manner that the Government has no intention of supporting without limitation the efforts of the farmers to put the screws to prices for agricultural products and to stimulate in this manner an increase in the sown area and laying the foundations for new overproduction.

Before coming to the main question, the latest trends in the development of agricultural production, as well as their relation to the *ownership of the soil,* we must touch upon the following question: What can be undertaken and what can be achieved by the "stabilizing" associations already formed by the Farm Board and by the organizations subordinate to it? We have already written about the millions of credit now being extended to wheat cooperatives and cotton producers for the purpose of witholding these products from the market and keeping up the price. But there remains the doubt whether this granting of credits will not call forth anew a *frozenness* of credits despite the fact that in accordance with the credit policy of the Farm Board, credits are granted to cooperatives only after they have received a preliminary credit from the bank. But we will not go into this question here.

In fact, inasmuch as outright dumping with a Governmental subvention is officially excluded from the plan, there remains within the sphere of activity of these associations the regulation of the marketing factors to the extent of, say, the Canadian wheat pool; but we must observe here that in our own opinion analogous cooperative organizations in the United States will most likely not assume a similar course of development, nor of similar achievements, not to mention the fact that even the strongest supporters and protagonists of this pool must concede the limitedness of its success.

As a matter of fact, aside from the circumstances that within the Pool there arises strife, and difficulties are encountered in keeping the farmers that have contracts with it from selling wheat on the open market whenever there is any profit in doing so; that moreover the pool is far from having in hand the competition of firms in the wheat business which of late have begun to *combine* to be able to put up a stronger front against the activities of the pool; of exceptional importance is the circumstance that the pool has no influence whatever upon the *extent and the methods of production.* It is therefore not surprising that notwithstanding its existence and well-known success, we can already cite facts in Canada on the

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taking over of individual wheat firms by corporations, which facts are so clearly evident in the United States.

We have already observed that despite Government credits, the activities of cooperatives and "stabilizing" associations already established and being established will in all likelihood proceed under less favorable circumstances than in Canada. It is true that in the United States we may expect a more constant and more successful control over the agricultural produce market in favor of the farmers, as a result of the "rationalization" of trade and of less lee-way between the price received by the farmer-producer and the price paid by the ultimate consumer. Here we have various possibilities traceable to the circumstance that while prices for agricultural products at the present time are almost 50% higher than pre-war, the cost of distribution is 90% greater than before the war, and retail prices are therefore 70% higher than than before the war, it is therefore possible to find that in the city of St. Paul, for instance, in the State of Minnesota, a quart of milk cost 12 cents, and in Chicago 14 cents, although dairy farmers in Minnesota receive better prices from the dairies than the farmers in the suburbs of Chicago. But even here, future possibilities are very greatly curtailed by the existence and further development of trustified establishments both in the line of the manufacturer of food products, as well as in retail trade.

Be it by chance or otherwise, the fact remains that simultaneously with the adoption of the agrarian legislation of 1905 already mentioned, the largest *food trust* was formed under the aegis of Morgan's powerful bank—a consolidation of food-product concerns which until then had themselves been of immense size. As for the retail trade, the development of so-called "chain stores" in retailing of food products (which, with keen price-cutting and extreme rationalization of various stages of trade, is fighting against smaller chain stores which are systematically squeezed out), for a number of reasons leaves little room for the activity of the farmers' organizations. We recall what was said at the recent convention by the chairman of the National Grange already mentioned:

> "Each newly formed consolidation, each major combination put into operation, each new invention or discovery in science in like wise as a change in financial control has a tendency to place the scattered unorganized farmers in a worse position. . . ."

This may be applied in great measure also to the "organized" farmers in so far as their organization is confined to the sphere of selling only. All these considerations, however, carry only relative weight in comparison with the changes in the methods of agricultural production in the United States which must play a most important role in the price question of agricultural products for which

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there is a mass demand, such as wheat, cotton, and the like, and be of decisive importance also in the question of the success and of the direction with regard to marketing taken by the agricultural cooperatives now under forced formation.

At a meeting of American Engineers held recently, it was pointed out by the representatives of the largest agricultural corporations and also specialists in the latest agricultural technique that the new installations of machinery according to a schedule stimulated by the development of farm giants was lowering the cost of production to an incredible degree and in the same measure was also lowering the prices for various agricultural products. These farmers organize their production on such a basis that they derive *profit* from wheat even if the price of wheat should fall below 50 cents a bushel, and they are going to *extend* their operations even further on the same price level.

Therein lies the gist of the farm question and the whole hitch in the program of the farmers' cooperatives. This development changes radically not only the relations of production but likewise the relations of ownership in American agriculture; and not American agriculture only.

Nowhere in capitalist countries does the break-down of old methods in agricultural technique and the agrarian ties connected with it proceed at such an intensified pace as in the USSR. The preface of the recently issued review, "For the Cause of Collective Farms," which contains the text of the first All-Russian Convention of big collective farms, has the following to say on this subject:

> "We cannot develop by going successively through all the stages of technical development through which the capitalist countries have gone. Notwithstanding our poverty and partly even because of it, we must realize the latest achievements of technique and in this wise secure the greatest effectiveness in the expenditures for the mechanization of agriculture. We must raise not only the question of the *tractorization*—this question has already been raised and ways towards its solution have already been found,—but likewise raise the question of the *combinization* of our agriculture. . . . The combine no less than the tractor is a lever in the reconstruction of agriculture."

We know that the collective farm movement in the Soviet Union and together with it the radical shift in land relations is closely connected with the improvement of agricultural technique and the transition of small peasant units to large scale forms of agriculture; in fact both of these factors are dependent upon each other and in this way growth in technique changes land relations; and changes in the latter in the direction of their enlargement and socialization drive on the development of agricultural technique. Proceeding now to an analysis of the new trends in American agriculture, we

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note there an analagous phenomena and from time to time analagous *transitional stages*, of course with the great difference that, while in the Soviet Union this process is going on in a planned order, as its aim is the growth of socialism and with it a growth in the general well-being of the working masses of town and country, in the United States this process goes on in unbridled anarchic disorder, as its aim is private profit and its result—the expropriation and the exploitation of the broad masses of farmers for the benefit of big capital.

II.

American agriculture is now passing through a transitional period leading to deep changes which will make themselves felt upon the entire social structure of the country. The growing productivity of agriculture, as a result of the constantly expanding distribution of enormous power plants on the farm, is leading to a more pronounced differentiation in the farm population throughout the country. The triumphant march of the machine, which means an increase in well-being for the prosperous farmer, drives the poor farmer to poverty and ruin. It is a generally known fact that the farmer was the most vital problem during the last two presidential election campaigns in the United States. A very lively free-for-all discussion went on in the columns of the press on the question of American agriculture, especially in connection with the McNary-Haughen Bill, which kept on cropping up ever and anon. If we are to discard from these debates the political twaddle that filled the pages of the papers at that time to overflowing, the problems of American agriculture as such and in their social aspect stand before us quite clearly and well defined.

However we may evaluate the political importance of the election of a president, we can entertain no doubt but that these elections have shown, among other things, that the influence of the American farmer in political life is already on the wane. The victory of Hoover, whose candidacy was a direct challenge to the dissatisfied masses of American farmers, can only thus be interpreted. Moreover, even Smith's candidacy denoted a turning point in the political life of the country, testifying to the fact that the center of gravity had in fact been shifted to the city. It is true that the farmer will still have his say in the future political development of the United States, but gone are the days when in fact the whole life of the country centered around the farm.

What are the problems of American agriculture in the post-war period and what is the outlook for its further development? We will not undertake here the task of analyzing the economic structure of agriculture in the United States, and likewise cannot spend time on a detailed discussion of the various important changes which the

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agriculture of the country had undergone since the *deflation* of 1920. The consequences of that deflation are still being felt by the farming population of the United States. The expropriation process of every stratum of the American farmer by finance capital, which was making especially great headway at that time, was turning into a more or less swift process of squeezing out entire categories of poor farmers of small means, and of a growth in leaseholds.

During the world war, when American capitalism thoroughly cleansed the pockets of Europe, a certain portion of that lucre was cast to the American farmers in the shape of high prices for agricultural products. In the course of six years, from 1914 to 1920, the prices for agricultural products doubled, and of some articles more than doubled. Wheat rose in price from $1.00 to $2.50 a bushel; Corn from $.60 to $1.50 a bushel; Cotton from $.12 to $.33. According to the data of the National Bureau of Economic Research, the standard return earned on capital invested in agriculture advanced from 3.6% in 1909 to 8.9% in 1917; 10.7% in 1918 and 11.2% in 1919. What is more, if we are to take into account the fact that these standards of return were calculated on the basis of the high valuations on farm properties during the war, the real income derived from the values of farm lots from 1910 to 1914 can be set down as having reached the figure of not less than 17%. True enough, these incomes were all the same microscopic in comparison with the colossal profits of the American magnates of industrial capital, but none the less for American agriculture even these incomes were unusually high. As a result, investments in farms made great gains and a reckless speculation in farm lots set in. Prices for land became disproportionately inflated. According to census data, the value of farm lots grew to $26,000,000,000 from 1910 to 1920, that is, more than 90%. During the war years, profits from agriculture were capitalized on the cost of land, and the farmer, deceived by the ease with which credits were obtainable, found himself in servile dependence upon his banker when it came to his mortgaged and even over-mortgaged property. The mortgage indebtedness of farmers grew from $1,726,000,000 in 1910 to $4,003,000,000 in 1920; in 1925 it had reached $4,517,000,000.

The post-war depression was characterized by the general fall in prices of agricultural products. Never before this had there been such a violent fall in prices for agricultural commodities. From 135% (in comparison with the pre-war price level) in May, 1920, prices for agricultural products dropped from month to month and by 1921 they had fallen far enough to top pre-war prices by only 10%. The price for cotton was lowered in one year from $.37 a pound to approximately $.09; the price of wool fell from $.53

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to $.15; the price of wheat from $2.58 a bushel to $.92; for corn from $1.85 to $.41; prices for horned cattle were cut in half; pigs which sold on the farm for $.90 and more per unit of weight alive on the hoof in 1919, sold in 1921 for only $.065.

During the following years a whole row of farms went under the hammer, entailing the bankruptcy of a string of minor farmers' banks throughout the countryside and a mass flight of farmers to the towns. The migration of farmers' families to the industrial urban centers from 1920 up to recently involved some 4,000,000 people according to some tabulations. Meanwhile, whoever managed to weather this turbulent drop had to face the problem of either selling his products at higher prices or of lowering the cost of production, if he was to be in a position to sell grain at a profit. Everywhere there was carried on agitation in favor of the McNary-Houghen Bill, or for a cooperative movement, or a movement for the diversification of crops sown, or for reduction in the area sown, or in the sowing itself—whereas in fact all these movements really sought a solution of the farm problem through marketing. On the other hand, a whole section of the American farming class—the rich farmers solidly established with a strong economic background—arrived at a solution of the problem from the point of view of production. They began to effect changes in the methods of agricultural production, introducing the scientific organization of work and the rationalizing schemes of industrial enterprises with a view to reducing the cost of production on every acre of plowed land and to raise the standard output of the individual worker. "Mechanization" became the slogan of the American capitalists opposed to the McNary-Houghen Bill and similar measures for the raising of prices for agricultural products. As we shall see further on, the employment of the latest machinery in agriculture led in a large measure to a change in the character of the farm problem in the United States. The *factory-farm* becomes more and more the real source of agricultural production of the country. Hand in hand with this shift, a change in the form itself of land ownership is proceeding, bringing to the fore the *farm corporation* in place of the private-family farm, that is, a farm owned by a single (family)?

The "mechanization" of farming is a process which of course is not new in the United States. The use of internal combustion engines in agriculture proved just as revolutionary as the steam engine in industry a hundred years ago. But since the close of the world war "the technical progress of American agriculture advanced at a rapid rate." (Report of the Department of Agriculture).

> "The most important influence at work in the technical revolution of agriculture," writes Edward C. Meade and Bernard Ostrolenk, authors of a series of articles on the farm question appearing in the

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> *Annalist* of August 24th to October 5th, 1928, "is the rapid growth in the use of agricultural machinery—a process that has been going on but recently. In 1890 the entire inventory value of farm machinery in the United States amounted to less than $500,000,000. By 1900 this sum had grown to $750,000,000 and by 1910 to $1,250,000,000. At the same time this growth was, generally speaking, accompanied by an increase in the sown area. But by 1920 the inventory value in comparison with 1910 had doubled, reaching $3,500,000,000. Even if the rise in prices for agricultural machinery be taken into account, this capital investment over one decade of machine equipment for farms exceeded the general value of the mechanical inventory of agriculture in 1910; and if you consider the sown area, the investment in machine equipment for farms grew from $.76 an acre in 1890 to 3.76 an acre in 1920."

According to census data, the total horse power on farms in 1925 was 47,420,000, including an allowance for less than 20,000,000 head of horses, whereas in 1900 the heads of horses accounted for over 80% of the total horse power on the farms. In the short period of 24 years mechanical power plants on farms increased almost eightfold and now they exceed by more than 50% the number of horses and mules. It is a curious fact that the sum total of horse power in all branches of the manufacturing industry, according to the data of the last United States census, was 29,504,792. Some indication of the extent to which mechanical power is employed in agriculture of late appears from the statistics on the declining number of horses and mules on farms. Thus on the First of January, 1920, the number of these animals on the farms totalled 21,873,000. On the first of January, 1925, this number had already fallen to 20,619,000; simultaneously the number of tractors on the farms increased from 246,000 to 506,000. During this five-year period the increased mechanical power on the farms was in all likelihood five times as great as the fall in the number of horses and mules.

The growth of mechanical power employed on farms evidences a concomitant growth in the use of agricultural machinery. According to the data issued by concerns supplying agricultural equipment, they sold in 1926 $364,751,300 worth of machinery on the domestic market of the United States as a whole as against $340,271,000 in 1925, and $277,924,000 in 1924. Especially indicative of the mechanization of agriculture is the spread of the tractor. The number of tractors on farms grew from 229,000 to 506,000 in 1925, according to census figures. The Department of Agriculture sets the number of tractors at 700,000 in 1927, and in 1928 the number reached almost 900,000. At that we must bear in mind that in 1927, the year of the general industrial depression when the production of agricultural machinery fell just as other branches, the production of tractors and harvesters showed

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a growth nevertheless, which continued even throughout 1928 and 1929.

With the penetration of power plants into agriculture there originated on the one hand the process of *geographic specialization*, characterized by the selection of cultivated growths adaptable to mechanized economy; on the other hand, in conjunction with the change in the distribution of seed culture, there is going on a change in the *size* of farms and in the character of farming. The use of machinery has greatly changed the chart of corn, wheat, and cotton districts since war days and with this likewise the *social* structure of American agriculture. Large scale farms already preponderate on new lands, plain-like in character and of fertile virgin soil. Time and again the owners of these farms are found to be no longer individual farmers but *corporations*, the latest expression of the penetration of the realm of agriculture by *finance capital*. The formation of large-scale farms, the property of corporations, is hastened by the chronic *crisis* in agriculture already referred to, with the increase in *indebtedness* of the farmers and the panicky flight of the bankrupt farmers to the towns and the *concentration of their former holdings in the hands of financial institutions*. All this taken together portrays a new picture of American agriculture in the present period and creates new problems, the solution of which is wholly beyond the scope of the simple farmers' cooperative.

III.

In the April, 1929, issue of the popular magazine, "The North American Review," there is an article entitled "Flight from the Farms," describing the auctioning off of farms and farming utensils. For almost unused equipment ridiculous sums were realized at these sales, being at times one-tenth or less of their cost; a well-fed horse was sold for $11 and poorer horses at $1 a piece. For some items of use it was altogether impossible to find a purchaser. It is well known that the country population of the United States decreased by 4,000,000 during the last eight to nine years. For one year only, from 1926 to 1927, the farm population lost almost 1,000,000.

The reason for this mass flight of the farmers to the cities may even be read between the lines of an official report of the Department of Agriculture dated 1927, stating inter alia:

> "Nevertheless, we should not forget that the advantages enjoyed by American agriculture as a whole from rapid technical progress are accompanied by losses and it may even be by the bankruptcy of individual farmers who cannot keep pace with this progress. The growth in the productiveness of labor, bringing with it an increase in the output of each worker, may necessitate a decrease

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in the number of farmers. A rapid economic re-organization always proves beneficial to a part of the producers affected by it. Our foremost farmers (here the most prosperous farmers are meant—T. L. B.) sell or mortgage their lower breeds of cattle and raise only their better breeds. They use better seeds, apply the best methods in sowing and *invest large sums in mechanical equipment. Those who cannot follow this example find their position constantly more difficult.*" (emphasis mine—T. L. B.)

More frank are the authors of a series of articles written in the "Annalist," writing as follows:

"There are no means or ways of saving American farming in its present condition from the radical and extremely painful re-organization, compelling likewise a further mass emigration of the population from the farms to the cities. . . .

"An inevitable result of this agricultural revolution in the long run will be the cutting down by one-half of the present area under cultivation, the *progressive removal of half of the present force of workers on the farm* as being superfluous, pushing them off the farms into the industrial centers in search of work. This process of squeezing out the unsuccessful farmer and his family has been developing for a number of years: the total number of such unsuccessful farmers' families who had migrated from the farms to industrial urban centers since 1920 is set at approximately 4,000,000 people. This migration will continue until technical progress in agriculture will come to a stop. However, we know that this progress not only will not stop but on the contrary is continuing at an accelerated tempo. . . .

"What chance then has the average ignorant poor and backward farmers of small means to survive, not to speak of prospering under the attack of such a mounting avalanche of technical improvements and mass production? His days are over. He has already lost the battle. He may still vegetate on for a few years in the vain hope that something will happen to help him recoup his losses; but his struggle will become more feeble with each year; and *in the not too distant future he will find himself compelled to abandon his farm and to seek refuge in the ranks of hired labor.*" (Emphasis mine—T. L. B.)

How does big capital counter-balance this depopulation that it causes in the ranks of the American farmers? Let us pass in silence the question of the actual changes in land relationships which have been and are still going on in the United States; the question of the growth in leaseholds; the constantly mounting indebtedness of the farmer-owners; changes in the capital structure of agriculture, and so forth. We will confine ourselves to the following:

Bourgeois propagandists have long ago 'solved' the farmers' problem by calling in the aid of farmers' cooperative unions. Therefore every big loan made by New York and other bankers to farmers' cooperatives was extolled as a "new era" in American farming. Credit facilities for farmers was also on the program of the Republican ruling party which as early as 1923 introduced new legislation

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for the amelioration of land credits and afterwards additional legislation to further the growth of cooperatives. Now, through the bill passed in June, 1929, for the extension of credits to co-operatives and the establishment of the special Federal Farm Board, it holds out assurances to them of further grants of credit and of energetic governmental support. But in spite of the adoption of the new law and of the present activities of the Farm Board, we are of the opinion that this program has already been relegated by big capital to the background and in the foreground we find clearer than ever *the new program* for American agriculture: the formation of *farming trusts* (corporations) which in the opinion of specialists on the American agrarian question *is bound to change the individual ownership of farms.* The "new era" of farmers' cooperatives and credit facilitation, if it has not already suffered complete bankruptcy, at any rate, is subjected to grave doubts at the hands of the representatives of big capital. Until now its results have become apparent, for instance from the fact that (according to the testimony of the Department of Agriculture itself) the indebtedness of the farmers exceeds farm values by one-third, which ratio deviates by far from actual facts, if you take into consideration that a part of the farmers, by reason of their impoverished circumstances, are not in a position to receive advances, while another part constitutes the rich capitalists who own immense farms and for whom farming is merely a pleasant pastime and who of course do not run into debt. The success of the "new era" can also be seen from the fact that with the beginning of 1921 the number of bankruptcies increased each year and that finally (according to the testimony of experts) American agriculture now finds itself in a worst condition than in 1921.

What is the outlook for American agriculture as depicted by the defenders of the most modern method of capitalist agriculture?

In the opinion of Professor C. Brookings of the Washington University, American agriculture is on the threshold of a period of grand prosperity as the result of the formation of big farm corporations. These large-scale farms will be managed by specialists and will be equipped in accord with the last word in technique. It affords the owners of farms the possibility of exchanging their land titles for shares in a corporation. With rational management, a few days a year will suffice to work all the soil and to gather in the entire harvest of the country.

The farming future for American farmers is drawn by Henry Ford in his recently published book "My Phylosophy in Industry," where he says that it is necessary to bring about a radical revolutionary change in farming: "Big corporations whose only task will be to carry out all the operations required in plowing, sowing, raising

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and gathering of the crops, will take the place of the individual farmer; or perhaps groups of farmers will unite to do this work on a large scale."

A similar view on the lack of economy of many present-day farms is entertained by Miller MacMillan, a famous writer on agricultural and technical topics, as well as on industrialization. In his recent book entitled "Too Many Farmers" the author finds that on an average the productivity of farms is too low and the cost of production too high and lays down the principle that "low cost of production permits of greater profits than high prices." As a direct consequence of this conclusion the author gives as his opinion that the corporative form of farming establishments is necessary for their successful development, and at the same time he emphasizes that the small farmer without means must be banished, proclaiming at the same time his program with the presumptuousness peculiar to the propagandist of American big capital: "Let agriculture itself become big business and occupy its place among the businesses that make the United States a world phenomenon!"

This idea of applying to farming not only the methods of mass production but also the consolidation of farming enterprises into big trusts that enjoy the financial support of the banks so characteristic of the other trustified branches of industry is now being maintained by numerous representatives of large scale farming enterprises as well as large financial establishments. Thus Thomas D. Campbell, the head of a well-known concern, planting 100,000 acres of wheat a year in the State of Montana, concludes that banking institutions and private depositors will invest as much capital in farming as they are investing at the present time in the manufacturing industry and other major branches of production. That this idea is not a mere abstraction is proved by the existence of a great number of very large farming establishments as well as by the recurrent press dispatches reporting the formation of farming corporations as well as of banking groups interested in the organization of associations of that description and in such agricultural operations in general. Moreover, in banking circles they are already foretasting the success of operations called forth by this new turn in American agriculture. The former president of the New York Stock Exchange, I. Ch. Simmons, declared at a bankers' meeting that he is a believer in the development of farming corporations, thanks to which the farmer, instead of borrowing money, will be able to sell the share corresponding to his portion in the enterprise. Mr. Simmons explained further that the investment market could never directly support agriculture for the reason that agriculture was rarely organized into big trusts like American industry and that he believes that *closer relations* between banking capital and agricul-

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ture should be initiated in the very near future. In this way *finance capital is preparing to exercise decisive and direct mastery over that branch of economy which heretofore, due to its dispersion, had been subject to the yoke of finance capital only indirectly.*

The collapse on the stock exchange that occurred recently and the general crisis that has set in certainly ought to *hasten this process* of forming large-scale agricultural undertakings. Ready capital now free from speculative engagements, encountering difficulties in being employed in American industry or trade, will be certain to go after agriculture. Even now we find large tracts of land accumulating in the hands of various financial institutions and many farms are kept off the auction block merely because the proceeds of the sale would not cover the loan. Even those of the agrarian investigators who deny the possibility of forming large-scale farms out of these parcels—alleging that the development of a system of leaseholding would be more likely—must admit the formation of intermediate forms on the way to large-scale management, such as for instance the consolidation of a number of farms under the single technical supervision of one specialist in agronomy, the introduction of a uniform plan of finance for these consolidated farms while retaining small farm ownership, and the like.

Several investigators of the agrarian problem in the U. S. now no longer raise the question of the small, weakly-financed farms, which are therefore being worked unproductively and the fate of which has already been *foredoomed.* What interests them is whether it will be possible for the large-scale capitalist farm of an individual family (the so-called capitalistic family farm), measuring up to 2,000 acres, to subsist under the competition of the large-scale "trustified" farm. This question was discussed for instance at the session of the American Society of Agrarian Engineers in Chicago in December 1927, at which opinions were voiced that in the event of two crop failures it was more than likely that the lands of these rich farmers would pass into the hands of an agricultural corporation. At all events, despite the insufficiency of the data and of the fact that several authoritative big capital interests (such as for instance the Chamber of Commerce of the United States) still prefer officially to controvert the preponderance of large-scale farming, yet the growth and preponderance of large-scale cooperative farming evokes no expressions of doubt from a majority of the agrarian engineers.

The present-day evolution of agriculture in the United States has proven to be a splendid refutation of the revisionist critics of Marx of the '90's of the last century (David, Herz and others) who argue that in the realm of agriculture the Marxian laws of capitalist development were inoperative, claiming that in agriculture

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small production has the upper hand over large production. But this evolution, in connection with the economic crisis in the United States, is just as much a refutation of the general run of American economists, beginning with Carver and ending with the "enlightened" Professor Seligman; and under the same heading with them may be placed also the Social-Democrats of all countries and the right opportunists of the Communist Party who maintained and are still maintain that the United States, despite all the teachings of Marx, is a country where prosperity on a capitalist basis may still be enjoyed.

In this connection it will be of the utmost interest to contrast the industrialization of agriculture now proceeding in the United States with the present-day industrialization of agriculture in the Soviet Union. There as well as here we have tractors and combines forcing out the horse, and conserving labor power; both there as well as here small-scale production is yielding to large-scale production, inasmuch as the Soviet collective farms correspond to the farmers' corporations, or to speak plainly, corporate trusts. But the social bases and therefore also the social consequences of these two instances are opposite' in the U.S. the development of large-scale capitalist farming "corporations" is ruining millions of farming folks, is laying the foundation of colossal unemployment, is rendering the problem of markets is still unsolvable, is deepening of the crisis of capitalism still further and brings nearer its downfall; whereas in the U.S.S.R. the intensive collectivization in the countryside based upon a new technical foundation raises the well-being of the vast majority of the peasantry, leads to a large expansion in the domestic market for the industries of the cities and wipes out unemployment, annihilating the contradictions between town and country, leads to the abolition of contradictions in market relationship in general, and to the establishment of a single socialist type of economy in town and country—leads to the complete victory of socialism.

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A "Fellow Traveler" Looks at Imperialism

By EARL BROWDER

SCOTT Nearing has published his new book on Imperialism, which he says is the ripe fruit of 25 years of study and writing. ("The Twilight of Empire," Vanguard Press, N. Y., 340 pages). The book gains a topical interest from the fact that it was the occasion for severance of Nearing from membership in the Communist Party. In this book Nearing finally demonstrates his inability to understand Marxism, demonstrates his fundamentally mystic or religious philosophy, which prevents him from understanding or contributing to that revolutionary movement to which he gives emotional allegiance. This article has the purpose of establishing the relation of Nearing's thought to various schools of bourgeois philosophy, and its antagonism to that of Marx and Lenin.

I. Materialism or Idealism.

Nearing claims for his work that it "follows the Marxian method." The Marxian method is the method of dialectical materialism. But Nearing's method is neither dialectical nor materialist; it is eclectic and idealist. While he quotes briefly from Marx and Lenin, the influence of their thought is quite absent. On the other hand, the influence of Oswald Spengler dominates the whole book, although his name creeps into only the bibliography, with a smattering here and there of other schools. Whether Nearing knows it or not (it seems incredible that he should be unconscious of such an issue) he rejects the fundamental basis of Marxism as well as the method.

From the beginning, Nearing's method is to "explain" modern imperialism by analogy with imperialist systems of the past. He searches for an "orderly pattern" to which corresponds all "imperialist" phases of history. With this pattern he professes to find the "explanation" of imperialism. The law of movement of modern imperialism he says, is to be found by tracing the "pattern" of the Empires of Rome, Greece, Assyria, Babylonia and Egypt.

In this there is the "morphology" of Goethe or the "Destiny" of Spengler, but nothing whatever of Marx and Lenin. The sterile "pattern" which Nearing searches out with such labor, has about as much relation to the actual events of history as the equally sterile "will of God" of the theologians. In fact, the only event that

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Nearing's pattern will ever explain, will be that event when Nearing publicly confesses his belief in God.

So we find in Nearing's very approach to his subject, in his formulation of the question to be answered, a rejection of Marxism. Implicit in his method is an idealistic philosophy, which predetermines that his conclusions will be wrong.

II. What is Imperialism?

Nearing takes the 17 pages of Part I. to establish his definition of imperialism. He quotes (apparently with approval) Lenin's definition of imperialism as "a peculiar phase of capitalist development" in which:

> "The domination of monopolies and finance capital has acquired very great importance; in which the division of the world among the big international trusts has begun; in which the partition of all the territories of the earth among the great capitalist powers has been completed."

But immediately he forgets all about Lenin, and on the very next page he gives his own definition in the following words:

> "Imperialism is the stage of economic and political development during which a ruling class conquers and exploits beyond the boundaries of the civil state." (page 16).

What has Nearing accomplished by substituting his own definition for that of Lenin? He has removed the examination from "a particular phase of capitalist development" to a general examination of civilization as a whole; he has substituted "conquest and exploitation beyond the boundries of the civil state" as the chief characteristics of imperialism, in place of its character as a system of capitalist class division and rule of the entire world. In place of the concrete examination of the actual imperialism of the modern world, Nearing has taken not even the concrete examination of some other "imperialist" system, but an ideal, abstract, non-existent "imperialism in general"—something which might be likened to the Hegelian "idea" which works itself out in the world of matter, except that Nearing does not even use the idealist Hegelian dialectic.

Within the limits of Nearing's definition, all conquest and exploitation is imperialism, provided it crosses a state boundary; from which basis it is possible to wander over the whole earth and through all history, for so long as there have been state boundaries there have been conquest and exploitation. Thus the study of imperialism for Nearing is at once broadened into a study of universal history; which history, further, becomes the repetition of a certain pattern; and the explanation of history is the recognition of the pattern in its various repetitions.

So we find Nearing's first step into his subject matter results

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in blurring all the sharp outlines of the problem, wipes out all definiteness and concreteness, and for the material problems of imperialism it substitutes the abstractions of an idealistic "pattern"—the substitution of Lenin by Spengler, of materialism by idealism.

III. Historical Parallelism and Marx.

There is no greater master of the use of historical analogy than Marx. But there is no greater enemy of a mechanical historical parallelism than this same Marx, whose system of thought is founded upon concreteness as a test of truth. In one of his most brilliant historical studies, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," Marx introduces the work with a brief but profound observation on this question. He said:

> "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great world-historical events and persons reappear in one form or another. He forgot to add: once as a tragedy, and the second time as a farce."

Directing himself against precisely such methods as that of Nearing, who seeks the "universal pattern," Marx said:

> "So extensive are the differences between the material and economic conditions of the class war in classical and modern times, that the political incidents born out of the struggle in our epoch and the other can have no more resemblance to one another than the Archbishop of Canterbury has to the High Priest Samuel."

It is true that Marx also formulated "universal laws" of history, but in no sense as substitutes for the concrete examination of the laws of each separate epoch; on the contrary, the "universal laws" of Marx were directed precisely towards emphasizing the *differences* between the various epochs and stages of history, and the necessity for finding the specific laws of each epoch as the only way to concrete understanding. Nearing quotes one of these formulations of Marx, without being able, however, to draw its logical conclusions in his own work. In the preface to the "Critique of Political Economy" Marx said:

> "In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation on which rise legal and political super-structures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness."

From this "universal law" of human history, we obtain the refutation of all such attempts as that of Nearing to find the "universal pattern" which predetermines the historical forms independently of those specific productive relationships peculiar to

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each historical epoch. The productive relationships of ancient and medieval empires were as different from those of today as "the Archbishop of Canterbury is different from the High Priest Samuel." Any and all attempts to explain modern imperialism by parallels with Greece, Rome, Babylon, or Egypt, are reactionary and obscurantist. They have no connection with Marxism or Leninism. They are the intellectual trash produced by the bourgeois understanding and outlook; and they cannot assist the proletariat in its historical task of destroying imperialism.

IV. Tautology in Place of Thought

Inevitably the idealist philosopher comes to the point where he must insert the factor God, or cover up the gap with tautology. Nearing does not bring his God into public view, but his system of thought cries aloud for a God to sustain its logic. Hence we expect to find many tautological paragraphs, and our search for them is not without result. This is particularly true at those points where we have to deal with the problem of the how and why of historical turns, the transition from one epoch or stage to another. Dealing with appearance of imperialism, Nearing formulates the explanation as follows:

> "This wide diffusion of empire building corresponds with the contention that imperialism is a phase of the exploitative process. Irrespective of race or color, when human societies have reached the stage of social development called civilization, the forces of imperialism have shown themselves. This could hardly be otherwise, since imperialism is a phase of civilization." (pp. 27-28).

Here is tautology of the purest water. Since civilization has been defined as the stage of history which produces imperialism, the appearance of imperialism is explained by the fact that the stage of civilization has been reached. And this is the "system" by means of which Nearing takes care of the critical points, the points where a historical turn must be explained. The tautology covers up the absence of a moving force, fills the gap which otherwise would require the entrance of God upon the scene.

What this says, stripped to its essentials, is that since Nearing has defined imperialism as a phase of civilization, no further examination of the origins of imperialism is necessary once the fact is established that the stage of civilization has been reached. "Imperialism, in other words, has been characteristic of the whole era of civilization" (p. 21). Or, more simply yet, imperialism and civilization are co-extensive and practically synonymous.

Civilization, in its turn, receives a definition as "the era of private property in land and other social productive goods" (p. 22). Thus we come to the conclusion that the rule of imperialism and

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of private property are identical. Granted that the system of private property is the necessary condition for the rise of imperialism, it is necessary to recall Professor Nearing to the problem of why, given a foundation of private property, a particular imperialism arises at a particular time, and especially the problem of how and why modern imperialism with all its *specific* features arose out of capitalism. With these questions unanswered, the door has been left open, with an invitation upon it for God to enter.

And does Nearing really insist upon describing every society based upon private property as imperialist? In that case, since we have no colonies without this predominant characteristic, the distinction between the oppressing and the oppressed nations has been destroyed by the metaphysics of Nearing.

That is where idealism leads in the study of imperialism.

V. The Imperial Pattern.

Nearing has found the fundamental laws of motion of imperialist development, traced in an "imperial pattern," which has been uniformly followed by the history of all known "empires." This pattern he gives as the basis for an understanding of modern capitalist imperialism. What is this pattern?

The pattern is a cycle of five stages, with each stage containing a varying number of sub-stages. The stages are:

(1) Establishment of the imperial nucleus; (2) Expansion; (3) Conflict for survival; (4) Imperial world supremacy; (5) Disintegration and dissolution. The last stage of the cycle becomes the starting point for the beginning of the cycle all over again.

Applying this pattern to the present-day world, all nations will have to be placed in one of the first three stages of the cycle. All nations are imperial nuclei in one or another stage of growth. Within the pattern, almost hidden by its main outlines, are certain sub-stages which are characterized by "revolts" of the oppressed. Thus, under the first stage, sub-stage Number Five includes "exploited slaves, peasants and artisans revolt." In the second stage, at a certain point "colonial business men unite with exploited workers in revolts against exploitation by foreigners." In the third stage, strangely enough, we find wars but no revolts (evidently this is the stage of "organized capitalism"!—of the liquidation of the inner contradictions!); out of the wars "one of the rival empires comes out on top and establishes its position as the supreme world empire." This brings us to the fourth stage (the stage of "super-imperialism!), the description of which by Nearing sounds like Lovestone describing the "Hooverian Age" of the American Empire, a period of peace and prosperity, of riches, magnificence and stability, with nary a hint of revolt. In the fifth and the final stage, sadly enough,

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"a parasite class develops," "a bureaucracy is built up," and other unpleasant things occur; finally "colonial revolts" and in the last sub-stage of the final stage "imperial decay sets in." This is, slightly condensed, the description of the imperial cycle discovered by Nearing as the fruit of his 25 years of study and research on the subject.

This cycle or "pattern," is the one single dominating thought from beginning to end of Nearing's book. It contains the Alpha and Omega of his political wisdom. With unconscious irony it is presented as an application of the Marxian method!

VI. Nearing's "Pattern" and Spengler's "Destiny."

The use of the term "cycle" by Nearing to describe his "pattern," was perhaps an attempt to relate it to the cycle of capitalist production analyzed by Marx. But the similarity ends in the word. There is no relation to Marxism in his thought. In spite of its being put forth with the trappings of "science," Nearing's pattern is a crude adaptation of the openly anti-scientific philosophy of Oswald Spengler.

Very briefly to trace the relationship between Nearing's "pattern" and Spengler's "Destiny," we examine the latter's "pattern" as contained in the charts attached to "Decline of the West" (English Edition, published by Knopf, N. Y.). There we find the "destiny cycle" of universal history expressed in terms of spiritual epochs, cultural epochs, and political epochs (the latter including incidentally an interpretation of imperialism). Spengler has four phases to his cycle instead of Nearing's five, but, as we quickly see, this is only because Nearing's special needs called for a division of Spengler's third phase into two separate ones.

Spengler's "spiritual cycle" contains four "epochs" or phases, which he names Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter. The first corresponds to Nearing's "Establishment of the imperial nucleus," the second to his "expansion," the third to his "Conflict for survival" and also "Imperial World Supremacy" (or, "conflict" could be included in the second with "expansion," according to taste), and the fourth to his "Disintegration and dissolution."

The "cultural cycle" is described also in four epochs, phases, or periods, corresponding generally to the "spiritual." The "political cycles," likewise, follows the same "pattern," beginning with the gathering of Nearing's "imperial nuclei," under the terms "primitive folk, tribes and their chiefs"; passing through "expansion" under the description "fashioning of a world of States"; and so on to the final "disintegration and dissolution" with "primitive human conditions slowly thrust up into the highly civilized mode of living."

We have taken space for such a detailed paralleling of Near-

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ing's and Spengler's cycles in order to bring out sharply how close in thought is the "Marxist," Nearing, and the open scoffer at science, Spengler; the self-styled exponent of "economic determinism" and the open champion of Destiny. Nearing uses the words and phrases of science, but his thought is determined by the same religious preconceptions as that of Spengler, the bourgeois idealist philosopher.

VII. Nearing and the Bourgeois "Historical School!"

Outside of the scheme of the "pattern," Nearing draws little directly from the thought of Spengler, but rather depends upon the so-called historical school of bourgeois thought. In attempting a parallel of modern imperialism with the empires of classical and ancient times, Nearing was not attempting anything new. It has been done time and again, and time and again it has been answered by Marxists. For example, we turn to Pavlovitch, whose book of lectures (1919) finds its points directed exactly against Nearing's thesis. A few quotations from Pavlovitch will serve to draw sharper the line that separates Nearing from Marx:

> "From the point of view of the representatives of the historical school, imperialism exists at all stages of human development; from the moment that human society was formed, imperialist policy commenced. . . . We reject these attempts at this too extended interpretation of 'imperialism.' We consider it wholly unscientific to try to discover the phenomenon of imperialism in the history of the Jewish nation, of Sparta, of Athens, and so on. . . . The economic structure of ancient Rome had nothing in common with the economic structure of our contemporary States, and once this is admitted it is readily understood that the foreign policy of ancient Rome, growing out of a different economic soil, could not have anything in common with the foreign policy of the capitalist States.
>
> "The problem of science is to distinguish one phenomenon from another. General definitions, throwing into one heap completely different phenomena, are of no value from a scientific point of view. One cannot identify the foreign policy of ancient Judea, ancient Greece, ancient Rome, the Medieval Age, and so on, with modern foreign policy. Marx, for instance, did not set himself the task of seeking out general laws for all epochs. He limited himself to the study of the definite laws of capitalist society, and differed in this from many bourgeois scientists aiming at establishing eternal, unchanging laws of economic development. . . .
>
> "From our point of view, imperialism is a special stage in the development of the foreign policy appertaining to a particular economic era. The very word imperialism has only lately made its appearance, and even in the best encyclopedic dictionaries of the beginning of the twentieth century it is not to be found. The word imperialism only began to be used at the beginning of the present century, during the time of the Anglo-Boer war. . . ."

From these words of a well known Marxian it is clear enough that Nearing's fundamental postulate of the problem is closely

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related to a definite school of bourgeois historians, but that it is antagonistic to the Marxian school.

VIII. Predictions on the Basis of the "Pattern."

What is the function of the "pattern" in Nearing's scheme? His own answer to our question is in the following words:

> "To trace the sequence of events that makes up the imperial pattern and thus to predict, at any stage of the imperial process, the succeeding stages of the same imperial cycle. Without any pretense of finality, it may be fairly asserted that ancient and modern imperial experience dovetails closely in the main outlines." (p. 36).

The answer seems to be clear. But what does it mean concretely? Basing ourselves on Nearing's cycle, we must consider all struggles of oppressed classes and peoples as mere incidents in the pattern, doomed to final frustration in the future as they have been in the past. The only possible ending of imperialism is its final stage of "disintegration and dissolution" which reduces society to its elemental units of self-sufficing village economy, only to begin the eternal cycle all over again.

If the "pattern" is our basis for prediction, then we cannot predict the coming of socialism, we can predict nothing but the eternal recurrence of the pattern. Translated into the terms of Nearing's detailed formula, this means concretely that the present phase of the "imperial cycle" ("conflict for survival"), must pass over into the next phase of "imperial world supremacy" of one power, that is, to super-imperialism. This super-imperialist phase will, according to Nearing, "make the world safe for profit" "Law and order are imposed; roads are built or improved; the land and sea are policed; commerce is encouraged and protected; long-term contracts are lived up to; rents are paid; money is loaned and collected; risks and interest rates are reduced." "The world is divided into a tribute-collecting centre and a tribute-paying circumference."

That is the perspective of modern imperialism, as laid out by the Nearing pattern. It sounds more like the drug-laden dream of Birkenhead-Hoover-Briand than the serious proposition of a "scientific revolutionist" who has set himself the task of overthrowing the system of imperialism. If anyone can believe in this "pattern" as the basis for the perspectives of the future, then he can be a revolutionist only as an act of faith (religious), and not as a matter of scientific conviction, the conviction that the revolutionary Party is itself carrying through the historical process.

Actually, this is nothing but the rationalizing of a petty-bourgeois despair and helplessness, of a complete absence of any understanding of the forces making for the overthrow of imperialism,

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for the transformation of the world into a new system of social organization.

Prediction upon the basis of Nearing's scheme, must inevitably postpone the destruction of imperialism to the Greek calends; predictions of a proletarian revolution can only be made by breaking out of the vicious circle of this "pattern."

IX. How Nearing Escapes His Vicious Circle.

After devoting 162 pages to the elaboration of his "pattern," Nearing proceeds in the remaining 18 pages of his text (the rest of the book consists of "data," quotations from references), to Part III, "The Twilight of the Empires." Here he struggles very hard, in an endeavor to bring forth from his pattern an immediate "Twilight" for imperialism. But in order to do this he is forced to break the pattern. His revolutionary perspectives appear as something entirely disconnected from anything that has gone before.

It is the prime function of any theory of history to explain precisely the great transformation, the turning points, when one system of social relations is transformed into another. It is precisely the fact that dialectical materialism, as developed by Marx and Lenin, really does this, that accounts for its tremendous power as a revolutionary instrument in the hands of the revolutionary class, the proletariat. But Nearing seems to have no inkling of this problem. He solves the problem by making a tremendous "leap" outside the confines of his "pattern." This leap is not a dialectical one; it has not been prepared by everything that went before; it is a violation of the theoretical premises that have been laid; it is a repudiation of everything which was so painstakingly built up in the body of the book.

We have followed the main current of his thought through 168 pages, and everything is made to fall within the "pattern." But the logic has reached its breaking point. The path is at an end. Here you must leap! What is the poor author to do? He jumps—but into the void!

Here is how Nearing makes his leap:

> "In each imperial cycle, when expansion is effectively checked; when food supplies, resources, and markets are cut off, the system of economy disintegrates and dissolves back to the level of its most stable units: the agricultural village and the local trading centre. These units are economically self-sufficient; they do not depend upon expansion; they can persist for a long period, almost unchanged, as they have persisted in India and China.
>
> "Once the level of world economy is reached, a new self-sufficient economic unit has been established—a cooperating world. Exploitation at home; class struggles; expansion, conquest and foreign exploitation are eliminated by the establishment of a socialized, cooperative world economy."

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Presto, change! The pattern is gone! "The level of world economy is reached!" Imperialism disappears, "eliminated by the establishment of a socialized, co-operative world economy!"

But how did all this happen, what was it that broke the pattern, what brought about this most tremendous transformation of all history? How does it come that the development of world economy, which sharpened the outlines of the "pattern," is at the same time the factor which "eliminates" the "pattern"?

We learn very little indeed of this problem from Nearing, except a few phrases: "The force that effects the transition . . . is the labor movement." "Today the world is passing through this transition stage—the period of the proletarian revolution" (which is not in the pattern!); "Really, there is little choice. The forces of social revolution" (not in the pattern!) "have pushed matters so far that no new, vital society can put on the garments of a system so far decayed and outgrown as capitalist imperialism;" "A successful Soviet economy will drive out capitalist economy as the electric bulb drove out the kerosene lamp," etc., etc.

The last words of the book sum up the mystery, leaving it more mysterious than ever:

> "Imperial cycles followed one another so long as the same general productive basis remained at the foundation of society; business for profit within the civil state. With the coming of the machine age" (which is apparently not business for profit within the civil state! E. B.) "the period of the great revolution—history entered a new phase; the race turned a corner, leaving behind civilization and imperialism; moving forward to an era of social production—a world economy; a co-operative society."

It may be unkind, after looking at this entrancing vision, to continue to ask questions of Professor Nearing. But, recovering from our dizziness at this tremendous leap which we have made with him, we attempt to look back and see how we got across this great chasm. "But Professor," we are forced to ask, "didn't you tell us that "the pattern should be more sharply defined in modern times than it was in classical times"? That was hardly a preparation for breaking the pattern entirely at the end, was it? Tell us, confidentially, what really were the tremendous forces which could carry us over the logical chasm? We go back over the preceding pages, trying to find the missing link!

Here it is, back on page 130, where we had passed it unnoticed on first reading, because it seemed to be merely one of the many digressions from the main thought, or a variation of the pattern: "*Machine production laid the foundation for a new form of social life. . . . The machine production world was actually a new kind of a world.*"

Exactly, Professor, the machine-production world is a world

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entirely different from all worlds that went before. And therefore all your 25 years of labor in trying to find the "imperial pattern" from all the old worlds, in order to explain the new world and predict its course of development, was just so much labor lost.

X. What is the "Pattern" Worth?

Nearing has labored hard, and brought the fruits of his labor as an offering to the revolution. What shall we say of the gift?

Ungracious as it may seem, the gift must be refused. For the revolution, the "pattern" is worth precisely nothing, and even Nearing had to discard it in order to be able to bring his book to an end. On the other hand, it may very easily—in fact will almost surely—be used as an instrument to throw confusion among the workers, especially among those who are untrained in scientific thinking, and who are impressed with the prestige of Nearing's long record as scholar and teacher. Our revolutionary theory, given us by many generations of working class experience and the titanic contributions of Marx and Lenin, is the most precious possession of our revolutionary world Party. It is our basic arsenal of weapons. It is the heavy artillery which will destroy the walls of capitalist imperialism. It is this, our most valuable and valued possession, which Nearing proposes to substitute with his hodge-podge waste-basket full of the sweeping of bourgeois universities. Firmly, and without too much gentleness, the gift must be returned to the donor.

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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912

Of THE COMMUNIST, published Monthly at New York, N. Y., for April 1, 1930.

County of New York

SS.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Marie Reiss, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that she is the Business Manager of The Communist, and that the following is, to the best of her knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are:

Publisher, Communist Party of U. S. A., 43 East 125th Street, New York City.

Editor, Max Bedacht, 43 East 125th Street, New York City.

Managing Editor, None.

Business Manager, Marie Reiss, 39 East 125th Street, New York City.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

Communist Party, of U.S.A., 43 East 125th Street, New York City.

Max Bedacht, Earl Browder and Robert Minor, Secretariat, 43 East 125th Street, New York City.

A non-profit organization—political.

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MARIE REISS, Business Manager.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 16th day of May, 1930.

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